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# THE GOSPEL OF CHINA

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KHUNG-FU-TSÜ  
PROPHET OF CHINA

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2.  
**THE  
GOSPEL  
OF  
CHINA**

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**“Love Virtue, and then the People  
will be virtuous.”**

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Edited and Newly Translated from the  
French of Dr. Pauthier  
with  
Explanatory Notes and  
Prolegomena

by  
**Duncan Greenlees, M.A. (Oxon.)**

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DUNCAN GREENLEES



## THE GOSPEL OF CHINA

**E**VERY man has in his heart the divine light of Reason, set there by Heaven as his guide in life. It is his work to develop this light, to train his mind and heart in every way, so as to realise his own perfection. Only when a man has himself attained his own perfection can he fully know the inner nature and needs of others and so truly help them in their own growth towards divinity.

Perfection is attained through patient and courteous commonsense, inspired by a sincere and warm love of others and guided by devotion to a ceaseless study of life and the laws of the moral nature. The highest knowledge is to understand human nature deeply, for it is cognate with the Universe itself. By diving deep into our own motives for action, we realise the mind of others and of the Universe. We thus learn the mandate conferred on us by Heaven, and are enabled to fulfil it.



Obedience to this inner law of our being carries us into the blissful eternal state of the Real Self beyond all thought and feeling. This can be known by all, though perfectly by saints and sages alone; yet few care to tread this Straight Path that leads to the highest Goal.

Only he who rules himself and is guided by reverence, piety and benevolence in his own family can be a worthy ruler of other men. The ruler's qualities are reflected in his subjects; a wise kind King will have no enemies to resist his will, while the tyrant, losing Heaven's support, will soon lose his power also.

Education is to raise the common man to the sage and saint, devoted to the study of the Self and to the welfare of others, simple and sincerely attached to the Truth, and revering the persons and ideas of all he meets. His unselfishness awakens unselfishness and loving helpfulness in others; his outer life is then a perfect image of the harmony in his own mind. Looking on all as his own brothers, he seeks in himself the cause of any disharmony that may arise or of any wrong that they may do.



to him. Ever aware of all things, he treads the path of sincerity, of calm understanding, and of tireless effort towards self-improvement, until at last he merges into that Perfection which is the One Law of Heaven, of Nature, and of Man alike.







# THE GOSPEL OF CHINA

## PREFACE

THE teachings of Confucius (Khung-fu-Tsü) and his great disciples, Thseng-Tsü, Tsü-Sse and Meng-Tsü, and those who followed them, are the foundation of the whole vast and ancient culture of the peoples of China, one-fifth of the human race.

For twenty-five centuries the mighty nation of the Chinese, now more than four hundred millions of them, have looked back upon these teachings as the highest summit of all human wisdom. They have regarded the books that contain them as inspired scriptures, and raised the great Sages who gave them to the world to the rank of Incarnate Gods, to be worshipped in every school and village temple.

During this long time, the Chinese might be a Buddhist, a Taoist, a Mani-ist, he might even be a Christian or a Muslim. Under all that, running in his very blood, in his mother's milk, he was a Confucian besides. He had taken in this teaching with his first earthly nourishment, absorbed it through the pores of his very skin from the air of his native land, lived and died in the



memory of its calm wisdom, its gentle courtesy. It has stamped on every Chinese soul its own mark of patience, kindness, and the love of family whereby a Chinese can be recognised today in any kind of human company.

Men have called it a philosophy, stressed its teachers' indifference to the personal aspect of Divinity, and even absurdly labelled it an atheism; yet it is now, as it has always been, a religion in the truest and highest sense. It is a way of life, it points to the Straight Path of Goodness which brings us back to the Divinity where by our very nature we belong, it tells us how to live and how to act towards one another. Lastly, it holds out to us the way of self-perfection, so that we may learn how to live in the Eternal, to abide in that undying Poise, which is the final secret that Nature has for us to learn. What more than this can any Religion do for us? <sup>1</sup>

That this priceless treasure of wisdom, clear and sparkling like a fountain from the pure depths of a Saint's heart, may be made a little easier for the English-knower to approach, that he may fill the chalice of his own heart with its life-giving waters, has been my aim in this little book. I have drawn its text mostly from Dr. Pauthier's valuable French translation, but I have also consulted several other readings. The Chinese scholar will, I am sure, be patient with the many errors which my ignorance of the original tongue has made

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *China Moulded by Confucius* (F. T. Cheng, page 85): "Let it be said that the Confucian Analects are to the Chinese their Bible, and that unless one studies them with a sense of awe or veneration due to all sacred books, one will, to say the least, miss their right meaning."



inevitable.<sup>1</sup> It is only a deep feeling of reverence and gratitude for the beautiful and inspiring teachings of the Confucian Classics which has driven me to undertake this volume. I offer it in humble devotion before the pure shrine of one of Humanity's greatest sons, the glorious Prophet-Sage of China, Khung-fu-Tsü.

<sup>1</sup> Though I have based my own English translation on the masterly and sympathetic version by the great French scholar, Dr. Pauthier, I have carefully collated it with those by Legge, Soothill, Doebelin, Giles and others who have given us extracts from the Four great Classics of the Confucian School.

In the footnotes Legge's version is referred to as (L) and Soothill's as (S).







## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The Historical Background

**L**ET us first take a brief survey of how China grew to the state in which Confucius (Khung-fu-Tsū) was to find it in his day. To the records of traditional annalists has now been added the more substantial and certain evidence of archaeology, and this quick survey owes most to the latter witness.

In *Early Neolithic* times, say B.C. 4000, China was a vast area of forest land on the periphery of the "Brown Race" civilisations that extended from Spain to India and spread their products as far as Britain and Korea. In forest clearings, little settlements were growing millets brought in from India, and by the end of the period they were also raising paddy crops in Central China. The people lived in pit-dwellings, and made rough bows and arrows, and by the coil-method they manufactured pots of the coarsest ware by hand. They had domesticated the dog and the pig, while wild horses roamed the vast plains of Mongolia and Northern China. Their worship was of spirits, and they practised orgiastic fertility rites and almost certainly offered human sacrifices, as did people everywhere else in the early agricultural societies.



With the *Late Neolithic*, say B.C. 2700, painted wares came in overland from the centres of the high cultures around Iran, with at first geometrical, and later on naturalistic, designs in black, white and red; these resembled the wares of somewhat earlier date in Egypt, Irāq and Susa. There was some trade in copper and bronze trinkets from as far away as the Ukraine, but this did not yet extend to more than beads and amulets.

This was the age of the great Emperors, constantly taken by Khung and his disciples as model rulers for their own age to copy. The Emperor Yao reigned, so we are told, from B.C. 2357 to 2256, and was then succeeded by his minister, the no less worthy Emperor Shun (B.C. 2255-2206). The lengths of these reigns seem a little strange in our ears to-day, but that may be nothing but our modern incredulity.

Shun was followed by the *Hsia* Dynasty (2206-1766), founded by Yü, another of the great Emperors of early days. By now people were living in small towns with walls of tamped mud. They still had no metals save for a very little used in the ornaments of the wealthy. They made a fine black ware in North-east China, with the aid of the potter's wheel. Cattle and sheep were introduced as domestic beasts, possibly from India or Central Asia, and it is likely that horses were sometimes caught and tamed, although the domestic horse of China today is certainly derived from types imported from the West.

At the close of this dynasty there was a brief period of confusion; its last ruler, Chieh, was overthrown.



T'ang, who founded the *Shang* Dynasty (1766-1123) with the sudden inrush of the Bronze Age. Now bronze came to be largely used for war, ritual, and the sacrificial vessels needed in the prevailing ancestor-worship. It was still a bit of a luxury, however, and was not yet used in domestic tools. Wheat was introduced from somewhere in the Middle East, and the water-buffalo and domestic fowl came in from India.

In this age, men lived in decent houses with gables and colonnades and with roofs resting on wooden pillars. They had already taken to chariots with two yoked, not harnessed, horses, and made spears, dagger-axes and helmets of bronze. By B.C. 1500 a very archaic script had reached developed form and was evidently in much use. The people had created city-states, and the matrilinear system of inheritance of Neolithic days had already given place to the patrilinear. They had priest-kings to conduct ancestor-worship and the adoration of a number of Gods, of whom the chief was Shang-Ti, the "Ruler Above", or Heaven.

During the latter days of this dynasty, at Sian in Western China, the Chou family were ruling an independent kingdom. Their two last kings were the famous Wen-Wang (1184-1157) and Wu-Wang (1156-1116), both of them to be later taken by our Sage Khung-fu-Tsü as great models for later rulers. Now the last Shang Emperor, Shau, was a tyrant, and after thirty-one years of his misrule Wu found an opportunity in popular discontent, invaded Eastern China and



quickly overthrew the Shang Dynasty, from whose scions Khung himself was to be born nearly six centuries later.

Wu established the *Chou* Dynasty (B.C. 1122-221) with its capital at Sian, and it was he who replaced the old method of tribute-collection direct from the farmers with a sort of feudal system. He introduced the seven-day week (probably from India), and first used eunuchs to guard women's quarters. Great men who died were buried in tomb-chambers of wood or stone covered with great mounds and usually crowned by a sacred tree. Their dead bodies were first smeared with red pigment, and gifts were made to their spirits, useful articles being buried with them. The masses still remained almost wholly in the Neolithic Age, while their rulers used bronze swords and, by B.C. 800, drove about freely in chariots; they kept their higher culture aloof from the common people. Few metal tools were yet in use anywhere in China.

The first recorded date in Chinese history is the solar eclipse of B.C. 776, and five years after this the *Jung* invaders from the West sacked Sian. The Chou Dynasty had to retreat with its capital to Lo-yang in the Honan Province. From that time they had little political power, but they enjoyed immense prestige as the custodians of culture and of the sacred rites of Heaven, whom they called T'ien and identified with the Shang-Ti of their predecessors. In many ways this dynasty has been regarded as more or less parallel with the Vedic Āryans of India.



The period B.C. 722-481 is known as the "Spring and Autumn Period", because it is covered by the annals under that name compiled by Khung for his native state of Lu, where the descendants of a branch of the Chou Dynasty had preserved in a pure form the rites and customs of their ancestors. By about the time of Khung himself (B.C. 600-500), iron was coming gradually into use in China, though it was rare until about B.C. 50.

The break-up of Chinese unity had thrown the land into confusion. The barons each controlled two or three strong walled and moated towns, while their retainers managed the towns more distant from the local courts. There was a religious air of devotion about these feudal lords, and the taxes were looked upon almost as offerings to a shrine. The daily life of courts was a mystic ritual, error in which might cause serious magical consequences. Thus arose a class of wise men who could guide the rulers in their every action, a class of sages, scholars and statesmen. It was as one of this class that we meet Khung-fu-Tsū, truly one of the greatest men in human history. Like others of his class, he too taught pupils and guided kings.

Up to his time witches and sorcerers still arranged houses and sacrifices, and spirits still mixed with men to receive their meed of worship and their offerings. Alongside the ancient polytheism of the masses now flourished the monotheistic idea of Heaven (T'ien) and of God (Ti). Kings still had to satisfy ghosts as well as men, and although Khung himself treated the subject of spirits with a rational scepticism, even after his days



the great philosopher Mo-Tsū attributed the prevailing disorder in the land to the rulers' neglect of the spirits of the dead. Yet in B.C. 662 Tso-Chuan had already said that a kingdom perishes when its ruler heeds the spirits more than living men, and this mood of indifference to the dead grew as time passed on.

By B.C. 780, alongside the concept of one supreme Heaven, had already risen the idea of two eternal Opposites *Yin*, masculine, hot, active, like the Sun, and *Yang*, feminine, cold, passive, like the Moon. These are the cause of all natural phenomena in several later Chinese philosophies. Naturally enough, when the mighty Chou Dynasty was driven from its capital in B.C. 771, the idea that Heaven plans everything as the supreme Director of the universe began to give way to the doctrine that man is responsible for his own laws, rituals and social conditions. The rulers soon lost the earlier sanctions of divine right, and by the time of Khung himself, few men were shocked when an unjust monarch was criticised or even dethroned. Many rulers met such fates in that Age of Confusion into which the Sage was born.

## 2. The Life of a Sage

1. The Boyhood of Khung fu-Tsu, 551-535 B.C.,  
*Whenever righteousness decays and unrighteousness is lifted up, then I myself come forth to protect the good and to destroy evil-doers, and for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness. (Gītā, 4 : 7-8).*



Into this confused age, in a disordered land, then, was born the man of destiny chosen by Heaven to confirm the ancient Law and to establish China in the way of righteousness.

In the modern province of Shantung, in the ancient state of Lu, where a hardy peasantry struggles against extremes of climate and year by year toils in the windy plains of Eastern China, lived in B.C. 552 a retired soldier. His full name was *Khung-Shuh-liang Heih*, and he was at the time the Commandant of the district of Tsow. He came of royal blood, for his ancestors had once been the rulers of Sung and had wielded the imperial sceptre for hundreds of years under the title of the Shang Dynasty (B.C. 1766-1123). Heih's own grandfather had migrated from Sung to Lu, and in course of time the family had fallen into poverty. Their royal descent, like that attributed to Jesus, gave them little comfort in their new environment.

Heih had already a large family of girls, nine of them. He had had one son, but that jewel of his crown was lost in infancy, and still vaguely dreaming that some miracle might give him another, he married again at the age of seventy. His choice fell on *Yen-ching-Tsai*, who was a daughter of the head of the noble Yen family.

The little home at Chū-fu (K'uih-fow) was soon brightened by the coming of a baby boy. The story of that birth was later overlaid with myth and legend, much of it common to all the saviour-children of the world. For instance, it was announced beforehand by a



god in a dream to the young mother ; it took place in a cave ; and it was hailed by heavenly rejoicings over the descent of the destined redeemer. But amid the tangle of these doubtful elements in the story we can find one which does seem to be true : the child was born at the winter solstice of the year B.C. 551.

The delighted parents, the aged father and the young mother, gave him auspicious names. The family name of *Khung* was there, of course, and to it they added the personal name *Chung-ni*, and the pet-name by which he later spoke of himself among his disciples, *Khieu* (Ch'iu) ; it was the disciples who later added the honorific *fu-Tsü* (Master).

Long before this time, his half-sisters had been married off, and the baby was alone with his parents. But in 548, when little *Khieu* was only three and toddling about the house, his father died. He was now his mother's sole comfort, though her relatives helped a little with money. This good woman, to whom *Khieu* was tenderly devoted, brought him up, and it was she whose simple teaching formed the basis of the philosophy that later was to mould China's thought for ages yet unborn.

As time went on, Ping-chung, the village teacher, took little *Khieu* into his school. He was a bright little boy, very eager in his work, with a sweet and gentle nature and a deep respect for old age, with an almost instinctive love for the treasures of ancient lore. Perhaps having an aged father may have helped to form this trait in him. Legge quotes a story that as a small child



he used to delight in playing at ceremonies and sacrifices. "The child is father of the man."

In 541, when Khieu was ten, there was a short break in his studies. His teacher, as a learned man, had to go to the local capital for the funeral of his Prince, and for some months the little school was closed. This threw the young boy on to his own resources, and he studied so intently that by the time he was fourteen he had learned all his teacher knew, and the school had no more to offer him.

During those closing years of his boyhood, Khieu spent much of his time hunting and fishing, in order to win provender for the poor table of his widowed mother. It may well be that the long hours of waiting for a bite at the end of his line were passed in that kind of meditation which ripens the mind for deep thought in maturity. We learn in GC 8 : 1 that he never used nets or snares, an unfair means of wholesale slaughter.

**2. Family Life, 535-525 B.C.** In B.C. 535, when Khieu was just on the verge of sixteen, he discontinued his studies and, to help his mother, sought appointment as an estate-manager at the local court. Even as a boy, he showed in office remarkable talent and a conscientiousness in his work that was all too rare in those degenerate days. He did not, like others, delegate his work to others poorer paid than himself, but saw to everything in person, and so built up for himself a name for honesty and sincerity that stood him well in later days when he came to full power in his native state. But even when tired with settling



agricultural problems he found time to go on with his studies; he himself tells us that he was continually busy with study (GC 19 : 1).

In 532, when Khieu was in his nineteenth year, his mother had the desire of every Asian mother fulfilled. She saw her son a husband. The wife was one *Ke-kwan-Tsü* (Tsze), of whom history tells us very little—for it is doubtful whether the married life of Khung-fu-Tsü was really happy. However that may be, the mother's heart was gladdened in the following year by the advent of her first grandchild; a little boy was born. The proud elders gave the tiny mite the name of *Pi-hyu-Li*. Two more children came later, both girls, and the kindly mother of our Sage was happy to hear the music of children's voices as they played and toddled round.

Her earthly happiness did not last long. Khieu, urged by the new responsibilities of a married man and a father, sought and got appointment under Government as a grainstore-keeper in 530, and in the following year he also became a regular teacher, taking in rich men's sons for private tuition. But in B.C. 528, while Khieu's young manhood was just blossoming, he was stricken by the second bereavement of his life. The gentle mother whom he adored was taken from him.

He buried her body at her old ancestral home, and piously moved the body of his father there and reburied it beside his mother's last remains. He then built a little hut near the tomb, and lived there for the three years of mourning prescribed by ancient books but now, like



many other good old customs, fallen into desuetude. His wife remained at her own home, and it was perhaps these three years of separation that estranged them from each other.

Khieu now spent his time teaching his pupils and meditating. When he finally, in 525, turned away from the holy spot that was consecrated by the dust of his parents' bodies, he had already made up his mind to reform the country and to turn the eyes of its rulers back to the glorious examples set by the wise Emperors and lawgivers of ancient days.

**3. The Early Career of a Sage, 525-506 B.C.,**  
Khieu now took the step, for the first time in recorded Chinese history, of dropping all other work and relying solely on tuitions for his maintenance. Rich boys paid well, and in that way he was able to give free teaching to many poorer boys who could give him nothing in return. When he had many students, he also received grants from the State to help him in his educational work. He made a point of welcoming pupils from every class in society, and laid more stress on character than on mere capacity when choosing them.

For the first time also, he began to base all his teachings on the ethics and culture laid down in the holy books of ancient times,—the Books of Verses, of Annals and of Rites. Thus he threw open the treasury of traditional learning to all who came to him, without caste or class distinction. Other teachers based what they taught upon their own opinions, but Khieu from the beginning stood on the firm foundations which lay at the base of



China's immemorial culture. Other subjects he taught included archery, riding, and the use of arms—in all of which he was skilled—together with writing, arithmetic, and the driving of chariots.

By 521, when he was thirty, he had completed the outline of his philosophy, as he himself tells us in GC 19 : 1. It was very soon after this that he formally divorced his wife, though we have no record of the reason for his action. His little son, Li, now just ten, came to live with him.

The Prince of the neighbouring State of Tshi (Ts'i, Tse) now heard of the wise young teacher of ethics and the arts of rule. Being faced at the time with a rebellious mood in some of his vassals, he sought Khung's advice on how to bring them back to their loyalty. Khung seems to have replied to the effect that the only way for a ruler to win loyalty was for himself to be loyal to his subjects' welfare, and to have added that unless this were done the Prince could gain nothing by a visit from anyone. However, he was assured by the ruler of Tshi that his advice would be fully followed. Then he went to Tshi in an ox-cart, and had a royal welcome. He stayed there for a short while, but when he realised that the Prince was insincere in his promises of reform and that he could do very little good to the people of that State, he took his leave and returned home to Lu.

Soon after that, two of his richer pupils of noble family persuaded him to accompany them on a visit to the Imperial Court, then at Loyang. The Prince of Lu courteously gave him a two-horsed chariot for the



journey, and thus he travelled in proper state. His host at Court was the musician and philosopher Chang-hung. This man introduced him to the Prime Minister, whom he advised to imitate the noble Emperors Yao and Shun of olden time. He stayed at Court for a whole year (517-516), but was much disappointed at never once being presented to the Emperor. His time was usefully passed in the study of ancient historic archives, of the Imperial rites, of classical music, and of the temple rituals. Here also he supported himself by teaching pupils, and his chief recreation was music of the austere old style. He himself learned to sing and to play on the lute with great skill.

Tradition tells us that he was one day taken to visit the great Sage *Lao-Tsze* founder of one of the three traditional religions of China, Taoism. Lao-Tsze was now a very old man, and his profound depth of mystic thought rather overwhelmed young Khung, who seems to have later adopted several of Lao Tsze's teachings. The old Sage rebuked Khung for a certain showiness and for his haste in seeking pupils to teach, and seems to have made light of his popularity so easily won, and his fondness for such frivolities as music and rituals. By some scholars, however, this whole interview is held to be apocryphal.

After his year at Court, Khung returned to Tshi, but even then he was still given no chance to put his ideas of reform into practice. He soon grew weary of this futile waiting for a worthless Prince, and when he was finally told by the ruler that his ideas were



impractical he went off to his own home in Lu. In 515 the Prince of that State promptly made him a magistrate. He continued his teaching work, however.

These next nine years were perhaps in some way the most satisfying in his life. As magistrate he had some scope for doing real good to the people and for setting up standards of justice and impartiality which were by no means common in that age. As teacher he was able to satisfy the usual need of a thinker for sharing his ideas with others, and he also had the cultured leisure needed for strengthening his own faith in them. He tells us that by B.C. 511, when he was forty, all doubts of the truth of what he held had for ever left him.

This pleasant period lasted until in 506 that Prince died. Then a rebellion drove the lawful heir from the land, and Khung felt it his duty to accompany him into exile, so he retired with him over the border, once more into Tshi.

**4. Vicissitudes, 506-497 B.C.,** We next hear of him in 503, back in his own State of Lu, where he was put in charge of agriculture. Honest, hard-working and efficient as usual in this work, he soon won the confidence of the Prince, who gave him at long last the real chance he had so eagerly awaited. In 501, Khung became the Governor of Chung-tu city, one of the chief ministers of the State.

He soon showed himself as the strong man in office, and made it clear that as he knew what was right to do he would do it without fear or favour. He stamped on



corruption with a heavy foot, and set all the selfish petty officials covering up the traces of their own misdeeds and reforming their ways, at least for the future.

He saw to it that all the poor had food to eat, even taking care that suitable food was provided for the young and old separately. So also he provided work for all, suited to the strong and the weak. He fixed the prices of goods, and used the State revenues to encourage trade. He put down brigands, repaired roads and bridges, and checked the power of the selfish barons, making it clear to all that in the eyes of justice all the Prince's subjects were equal. This did not make him very popular with vested interests, and he soon found that enemies were plotting against him.

It is most remarkable that even while so busy with the personal administration of State affairs Khung still found time for his pupils. The little school went on with its work. He taught the young men who came to him to be independent of offices and of farming alike, and to rely rather on their own intelligence and knowledge for a living. Many of his disparagers therefore said that he was a mere talker, enjoying the work of others without sharing their creative labour. Indeed, he is even now looked on as the patron of scholars who alternate studies and office without doing any material creative work for society.

On accepting office, he had stipulated on the Prince giving him his fullest support in all measures he might take in the interests of justice. He knew well there was danger for an honest ruler in a land where dishonesty



had long flourished. It was barely a year before he had to call on his Prince for the promised support. One of the strongest of the barons committed a crime and was caught. All thought that, as with other ministers before him, Khung would tactfully accept a bribe and let the man go. They were amazed and deeply shocked when, in spite of warnings from his friends, Khung actually ordered the law to be carried out. The baron was executed. For a while it seemed that the outraged nobility would rise and drive him from the land, but the Prince stood by his word, the people were delighted by the display of impartial justice, and the threatened storm blew over.

So prosperous and happy were the masses under their beloved Strong Man, that the ruler of Thsi became jealous of Lu. Perhaps he was vexed to see how much good the same Khung, whom he had driven away by neglect and apathy, had been able to do to the rival State. Anyway, in 499 Thsi was further enraged at having to cede some disputed land on the border, and her ruler was stirred up by some of Khung's enemies to plot revenge.

This is what the Prince of Thsi did. To weaken Lu by separating its Prince, Ting, from his wise minister, he sent a rich present to that Prince. He sent eighty lovely dancing-girls, together with many splendid horses. The plot succeeded. Charmed by the fair girls, Khung's Prince turned his mind to sensual pleasures, and the Minister could no longer get his attention for affairs of State. After many failures, Khung realised that his



position was now hopeless. He could do nothing more, and if he stayed he must be held responsible for the inevitable ruin of all he had done. Rather than that, he followed his own principle (GC 32 : 3), and resigned his post.

Slowly and reluctantly, hoping to the last that his resignation would rouse the dissolute Prince to a sense of royal duties and that he would be recalled, Khung moved away. He looked his last for thirteen long years upon the State that had been his first home. In the company of a few of his faithful pupils, he took the road of exile, and began to wander here and there among the feudal States, ever seeking one where he would have a real chance to build up undisturbed a model government, and ever being disappointed in the search.

**5. Days of Exile, 497-484 B.C.** This was in B.C. 497. At first Khung naturally turned his steps to Tshi where he had lived several times before, and where his name was now well-known. But his hopes were vain, and he at once moved on to the neighbouring State of Wei. Its ruler Duke Ling, gave him a kindly welcome, and he stayed for a year at its capital. But he found there was no real intention of giving him any responsible post, so Khung, who always wanted to put his ideas of government into practice and so benefit the masses, moved on his way.

Those were weary years of homelessness. The little band were often in real want, and sometimes they were assaulted by robbers or by those who looked on Khung as an unpractical dreamer and a pestilential talker.



Though often a bit disconsolate at his apparent failure, Khung never lost heart.<sup>1</sup> He was as much the calm, affable, and patient Sage in exile as he had been while in power, and the common people loved him. From State to State he wandered, always hopeful that somewhere a Prince would be found to let him serve the masses and build up a noble régime that, being founded on righteousness, would endure for ever.

Somewhere about B.C. 494, his son Li died,<sup>2</sup> and he was buried very simply (cf. GC 34 : 4). We learn that by 491, when the Sage was sixty, he was easily able to grasp the true causes of events. I wonder if that comforted him in the long years of his exile.

Two years later came one of the heaviest bereavements in his life. His favourite disciple died. *Yen-yüan Hoei*, of whom we hear in GC 34, though devoid of showy pretence, had won the Sage's heart, and at his death Khung was really shaken. He wept bitterly, and justified his excessive grief when reproved by the other disciples, by saying that his life was dissolved. Yet he kept his sense of propriety; he would not sell away his carriage to provide the beloved disciple with luxurious funeral rites.

Next year came another heavy loss, in the death in battle of another of his most faithful followers, *Tsü-lu*

<sup>1</sup> Once he was described by a villager as looking "just like a disconsolate stray dog". When Tsü-kung reported his saying to his Master, the Sage laughed heartily and said it was indeed an apt description.

<sup>2</sup> Others date this in 483, but this seems to be impossible for it preceded the death of Hoei.



(Tsze-lu), who had so often helped him by his intelligent questions. The death of his divorced wife Ke-kwan-Tsü gave him further pain in 484, and he mourned sincerely over the loss of her. Whatever had separated them was evidently no lack of affection on Khung's side; it may have been a lack of sympathy in her for the sort of life to which he had felt himself devoted.

He was an old man now, doomed to see others who were younger than himself pass before him. By 484, when he was already sixty-seven, he gave up all hope of being able to fulfil his life's dream of building up an ideal State. In that year, like many other old men of other lands and ages, he turned his mind back to the first scenes of life. He turned his footsteps humbly homewards to the place of his birth, there to pass his last declining years. He returned to Lu, to die there in peace.

**6. Closing Days, 484-479 B.C.** But the end did not come at once. Indeed, those last five years were in some ways the busiest, the most creative, of all the long eventful life. Knowing that Khung-fu-Tsü had no ambitions now to rule others, Prince *Ngae-kung* (Ai) (494-467) gave him a home in a lovely secluded valley, and there he passed his days in quiet literary labours, surrounded by the band of seventy disciples to the last.

We are told that he lived quietly busy on the national music, which he arranged according to types of tune (*rāgam*) (Lu-yun, 9:14). Slowly the old personal jealousies and hatreds that had forced him into exile died down; the old man was left in peace. Perhaps the



others pitied him for his disappointments and the apparent failure of his life.

He arranged the *Book of Annals* in better order, editing it carefully in order to illustrate his teachings. He performed the same service for the *Books of Rites and Changes*. He is said to have composed at this time the short treatise *Ta-Hio* (GC 10) and the *Book of Spring and Autumn*, a rather dreary chronicle of his home State of Lu, but many modern scholars believe that both of these are by others writing later in his name, and that we have really nothing in writing from his own pen. Certainly his teaching was mainly oral, given in conversation with his followers and illustrated by his own life and his attempts to carry out in actual daily practice the high philosophy he taught in words.

He was often melancholy when he looked back on his long life of seeming failure. He had nothing to show for his efforts. Corruption had swept in again when his strong guiding hand had been removed; China seemed to be plunging ever deeper into decadence. But he had builded better than he knew; his ideas had been widely spread among the masses by his almost aimless wanderings, and had awakened in them for the first time the idea that their rulers had the duty to rule them well and to protect them from all harm. His love for learning and his deep reverence for aged things had permeated the very soul of the Chinese people, where it has burned with a steady glow ever since.

He rejoiced in the simple village life of the valley. He shared their festivals, watched their folk-dances, and



treated the peasants with the same gracious old-world courtesy he had always shown to Kings and Princes. Once more only was the even tenour of his life to be disturbed. The ruler of Thsi, his old enemy, was murdered. Chivalrously the old man, Khung, tried to persuade his own Prince to march into Thsi to avenge the crime, but his word could not prevail; Lu would not go to war on such a pretext.

In B.C. 481, the old man felt his work was done. He tells us that he had satisfied his heart's desire without excess, having put away the ambitions which had swayed his life and realised the peace of inner attainment, the Poise of moveless Harmony, in his own soul.

Next year, he called his disciples together for the final teaching. As pilgrims they went up a certain holy hill to offer thanks to Heaven for the ending of his work. There on its summit he gave them all his last advice. He said: "Look into your heart, each one of you, and find what special talent you have been given by Heaven. Train that, and use it for the good of others." That was his last word, and it was in keeping with his life-long principle of *swadharma* as the cure for all disorder and oppression. It is interesting to compare this last public act with the final Pilgrimage of the Arab Prophet, Muhammed, and with the last recorded words of the Buddha, "Work out your salvation with diligence."

Khung had at last retired from all teaching work, and some time in the year B.C. 479 he died in the arms of his grandson, *Khung-keih*. It is said that as he passed



away he breathed out the words, "No intelligent ruler arises to take me as his teacher; my time has come to die."

His disciples buried him with all reverence, the Prince of Lu arranging for a splendid tomb at his home village of Chū-fow, now called Kio-feu-Hien,<sup>1</sup> and there they stayed in little huts around the place for the prescribed three years. Then some thought of choosing a successor among themselves, but the idea was given up, and most of them went off quietly to their homes. Only one, the most devoted of them all, stayed on for three years more to mark his double reverence, and planted at the tomb a tree which has survived until our own times.

**7. His Work and Character.** Khung was neither a Philosopher only nor a Statesman only, but a Platonic blend between the two. We can picture him in the presidential chair of Plato's "Republic"; we can think of him as a friend of Socrates, to whom indeed he has so often been compared.

Khung was a lover of the common man, a true democrat in the Whitman sense, with a strong faith in man's essential goodness. Man is not separate from, but a part of, Nature, and he must learn to live in harmony with the world around him. Punishment is therefore out of place, a sign of rude ignorance. No laws from outside are needed to guide or to restrain man, for in

<sup>1</sup> Words of the Prince of Lu on the Sage's death: "Alas! Heaven has no pity on my State by not leaving it that venerable man! Now I am left alone on the throne like a sorrowful sick man. Oh, my reverend Father, there will be no one to guide me!" *Jaw Chuan*, Bk. VI, 16th year of Duke Aoi, (quoted by Cheng, p. 57).



himself is the Heavenborn light of Reason which needs to be fanned and followed. So closely kin is Man to Nature that his acts affect her harmony and order ; the existence of a bad ruler brings on drought or flood. Thus Khung regarded the right education of the ruler as supremely important for man's welfare, and strove all his life to play his part towards that end. It was only when he had no chance to guide any ruler that he turned to books and his lesser work of editing the Classics.

Certainly, as a Statesman and a Democrat he was centuries ahead of his time. Perhaps it was he who first in history stressed the responsibility of rulers to their people by declaring that the State is the business of everyone who lives within its borders. In the internationalistic pacifism of the Egyptian Akhenaton and the appeals to righteousness of the Hebrew Prophets, there was nothing like this. He disliked intensely the social changes and confusion of his time, and threw back his own ideals for the future into a fancied Golden Age of the past. This was because of the inherent conservatism of his very being. He would certainly have stood with romanticists like G. K. Chesterton or Hilaire Belloc had he been born in the England of our days. It says very much for its power that, although unwelcome to the self-seekers of his own day, his ideal became the doctrine of state for a fifth of humanity through the many centuries that have passed since then.

Interested in simple everyday things, Khung took the common average man in the ordinary family circle



as his model. No extraordinary types had for his mind the irrational fascination they exercise on smaller minds. So his ethics are practical and based on essential commonsense, with very little of the metaphysic which intoxicated Lao-Tsze. That is why they are as applicable now as they were in China thousands of years ago ; they are of eternal validity because laid on the foundation of human nature. He prepared men to live and to enjoy life, as Alfred Doebelin says with keen insight.

Thus we find him stressing Sincerity, Kindliness, Courtesy, Filial Piety, and the ability to mix with others and adapt oneself to one's environment—qualities calculated to ensure a peaceful and harmonious life in society. It is in keeping with this simplicity of ethic that we hear nothing of the visions or mystic powers of this Chinese "Prophet" but rather of the food he ate, the clothes he wore, and of his manners when attending Court.

Because man is naturally good, there is no innate "original sin" to be warred against and eradicated by violent self-mortification. It is foreign to the whole mind of Khung-fu-Tsü to think of asceticism or repression of any kind. Not self-restraint but the free and full education of man's inner goodness is the way to righteousness and perfection. In all he thinks and says and does, let man be true to himself and kindly to others. That is enough. It will lead him straight to the perfection which is his Goal, his real nature even now. Thus he will fulfil the destiny that Heaven has ordained for him. To teach men this was the mission entrusted by



Heaven to Khung, the Prophet of China, and nobly did he do his work.

How did he do this? Unrighteousness in their rulers had plunged the people of China into the misery of an age of confusion and petty feudal tyrannies. The great Emperors of the past had ruled in harmony with Nature; their canons of action must be restored to guide the rulers of today. Thus Khung turned to certain of the ancient Books which claimed to relate the ideals and deeds of these great men of the past. He edited, rationalised, and quoted these incessantly, no doubt often adjusting them to the brighter light of his own keen vision and conscience. He laid more stress upon the meaning and purpose of the rites in daily life than on their form, and in that way succeeded in giving these old texts a deeper and an eternal sense, which has converted them into scriptures of universal value.

He loved the old culture of the Princes of Chow who ruled in his own home State of Lu, and in order to maintain the ancient rites of that dynasty, which had once ruled China as a whole from 1122 till the fall of Sian, he allowed himself to keep to certain luxuries of life. In all his teaching of the pupils and disciples who came to him he aimed at a wide and non-sectarian culture. Thus his followers, unlike those of other great religious leaders, were called, not Confucians but simply "scholars" (*ju*)—a proud name indeed. It is characteristic of his own attitude to life, even to its humblest forms, that the first words of the *Book of*



*Rites*, as it left his editing hands, are : " Always and in everything let there be reverence."

To the very detailed picture of Khung-fu-Tsü the man, as given in Chapter I of the '*Gospel of China*', let me add only that he was tall and of dignified appearance, had a dark complexion, a big flat nose with small bright eyes, while his face was severe and yet at the same time mild. His voice was deep and musical, his manner rather remote and formal in public but most sweetly amiable in the privacy of friendship. He was the first man to write private books as distinct from State chronicles, and to develop a detailed system of thought, as Dr. Y. L. Fung tells us. Accident or destiny made him the first travelling scholar and philosopher—which was well for mankind, for thus his ideas were widely spread and took deep root. He holds today a place in the mind of China not less vital than the unknown writer of the *Gītā* does among Hindus.

### 3. What Became of it All

Perhaps the Prince Ngaekung of Lu and his wise men, when they heard that the restless wandering preacher Khung was no more, may have shrugged their shoulders sagely and said, " Well, what was the good of it all? He has just wasted his life, moving here and there and crying in the wilderness! And what has he achieved? Nothing at all!"

But if they said that, their descendants will have contradicted them. Though Khung did not live to see



the fruit of his work (few really great men ever do : for nations are not reformed or built in a generation) his own vision when he took that last pilgrimage to thank Heaven for its completion (as Jesus cried, "It is finished!" on the Cross) was a truer vision than that of his shortsighted contemporaries. He had ploughed the field, sowed and watered the seed, and the warm sun of Time would ripen it into a rich harvest. He had left a band of disciples who, though they did not make the fatal error of deifying their great Master, knew he was far the greatest man who had ever lived (in China, at least), and were resolved to study and to spread his teachings and to mould their own lives upon them. Thus the message was in time spread from end to end of the vast Celestial Empire.

Then, born in B.C. 470, a few years after the death of Khung,<sup>1</sup> came *Mo-Tsü*, no less great a saint and philosopher, who for eighty years, probably in the same little State of Lu, taught his own noble doctrines. Ascetic in nature, he set up self-suffering as the ideal, and taught universal love and harmlessness. He opposed the exclusiveness of aristocratic caste, rather encouraged by Khung, and condemned all spending on more than was absolutely needed by the people. He opposed everything that would not help the people to get food, clothing, and leisure, and regarded ceremonial and art as a waste of time. He taught that absence of love is the greatest of evils, and that human nature is neither good nor bad but

<sup>1</sup> But Legge understands that he was only a generation or so earlier than Meng-Tsü himself.



that its colouring depends on environment, which must therefore set up Love and a rational simplicity instead of blind Fate as its guiding star. The aim must always be the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and there is a place for luxuries only when the real needs of everyone have been satisfied.

Mo-Tsü organised his disciples into a regular church, and sent them out as missionaries here and there. Naturally, they soon came into clash with the disciples of the aristocratic and conservative Khung because of their own fundamentally democratic and modernist spirit.

Soon came *Yang-Chu* or *Tsü-chu*, the other great opponent of Khung's doctrines. He was the first in China to justify the recluse in withdrawing from the world; he held a frankly pessimistic view of life. Society is incurably wicked, and the individual cannot really help it to improve. Each should therefore retire and perfect himself in solitude, for the individual is of priceless worth, and his perfecting is the real aim of Life. Guarding the Real in his own life, he should not let the outer world contaminate him or entangle him in its viscous coils. In order to find the real value of Life, he must learn to harmonise and govern his desires by self-control.

To combat these two great schools of thought, arose the greatest of Khung's disciples, *Meng-Tsü*, the St. Paul of Confucians, of whom we have more to say in the next chapter (cf. GC 45 : 3). He too lived to a great age, dying only in B.C. 289, and he must have seen the first plough drawn by oxen replacing those



pushed by human hands; this began its work and revolutionised the farmer's life by about B.C. 350.

In B.C. 256, while the followers of Lao-Tsze and of Khung-fu-Tsü were also coming into collision, the long-lived Chou Dynasty came to an end. In 245, a brief period of confusion made way for Shih-hueng-Ti, the ruler of the State of Tsin (Ch'in). This man overthrew all the States and by B.C. 221 established himself as sole Emperor, founding the *Tsin* Dynasty. The feudal system had broken down, and it was now abolished; by this time the army chariotry had also given place to mounted bowmen, an early form of cavalry. The Age of Warring States (B.C. 403-221) was over, and Shih set to work to build China on his own lines. The time was propitious for a big change, for even during the previous two centuries many lowly men had risen to high rank, while others had fallen into poverty and oblivion.

Shih determined to make a clean sweep of the old, and in B.C. 213 he ordered all books to be burnt save a few he himself had chosen as being records of his own family. He buried 460 scholars alive because they had refused to surrender their precious manuscripts, and countless volumes must have perished for ever. Those who were later found with unsanctioned books were enslaved for labour on the Great Wall. But like most of such fanatical "reformers", his work was short-lived. In 209 he died, and three years after that a peasant was able to create a new régime, the *Han* Dynasty, which lasted gloriously until A.D. 220. Money, irrigation,



flood-control, and scholarship became dominant factors in Chinese life.

The Han Emperors set up a new, but weak, kind of feudalism by gifts of land to those who were loyal to them; this system vanished again soon after Wu-Ti introduced the system of examinations. Conservatism again became the order of the day, and the Chou culture long preserved in Lu was again the national ideal. The founder of the dynasty himself visited the tomb of Khung-fu-Tsü as a pilgrim in B.C. 194, and in A.D. 72 the seventy-two chief disciples of the Sage were officially honoured. The Emperor Wu-Ti (B.C. 140-87) had already made the teachings of Khung the official doctrine of the State and founded a university specially to study them.

Laws were codified on Confucian lines, and the system of appointment on the result of examinations was established. Though philosophic speculation was now frowned on, the utmost support was given to scholarship, and the Classics enjoyed the highest prestige.

The Han Dynasty was also a period of great advance in arts and crafts. During this period the merchant classes were gradually rising into power, peasants gained big estates, and luxuries increased. It was indeed an age of great social changes and such transition as Khung himself would surely have resisted to the last.

In A.D. 220, it was followed by the short-lived *Wei* Dynasty, and when that fell in 265, the first ruler of the *Chin* Dynasty (265-420) issued an edict decreeing four seasonal sacrifices to Khung-fu-Tsü every year, and his



home town built a temple in his honour. Like most benefactors and lovers of man, Khung had at last become a god. In 555 it was ordered that every main district town should have a temple dedicated to his worship, and in 637 that every school should have his picture.

The attempt of the followers of the Prophet Māni to capture the hearts of the Chinese people had definitely failed by 1166, though in spite of cruel persecution they survived in various disguised sects as late as 1646, and perhaps even later in the far south. Taoists and Buddhists never found much trouble in adding Khung's teaching to their own, and so they escaped the persecution that drove the Māni-ists underground. Even up to our own days, the vast majority of Chinese, of any religious faith, revere Khung as few other men in history have been revered. On his teachings the whole of Chinese culture, society and thought, as we know them, have been founded. And that is not a little thing for a poor man, the son of a lonely widow, sometimes uncertain about his next meal or night's shelter, to have achieved in a single lifetime! No, Khung's life was no failure.

#### 4. The Life and Work of Meng-Tsu

*Meng-Tsü*, who was to his Master much as Plato (his almost contemporary) was to Socrates, was the direct disciple of *Tsü-Sse*, the Sage's grandson. He was born in B.C. 371 in the small Shantung State of Tsāu, now known as Meng-kho, and quite near to Lu.



Like Khung, Meng-Tsü (better known in the West by his latinised name of Mencius) lost his father *Kung-t* in his early childhood. He was only three when left to the tender care and teaching of his mother. *Chang-Shih*, and supported by her labour at the hand-loom. Later on he went to the village school, but was not noted as in any way an outstanding pupil save for a persistent habit of imitating the actions of those whom he saw near his house.

Studying with the followers of Tsü-Sse, he soon became an ardent admirer of the work, traditions and personality of the departed Sage. He felt it was his mission to transmit those teachings to posterity, and by about B.C. 331 he came out into the open as a public teacher. That was just the time when in the West Alexander was beginning his meteoric career of war.

Meng-Tsü moved about with his own disciples *Yo-cheng-K'o*, *Wan-chang*, and others, from State to State over the countryside, teaching and advising rulers exactly as Khung-fu-Tsü had done before him. He was perhaps bolder and more outspoken than Khung had been, for Meng-Tsü never had the hope, or perhaps the desire either, of ruling as a Minister himself.

When he had come to the age of 69, as the land was then full of war, State against State, Meng-Tsü retired and settled down quietly in a secluded spot, just as Khung had done before him, and spent his time in the same way as he had done. He put the Classics in better order, we learn, prepared the records of his own sayings to form the present Fourth Confucian Classic



that bears his name, and edited several books of poems and historical annals.

He lived to be eighty-four years of age, and when he died, his body was buried near Tsāu-Hien in the Shantung Province, where some of his descendants are still living today. His writings were almost ignored until the end of the Han period (A. D. 200), but he gradually followed the same road to deification as his predecessor had done. In 1083 he was declared the Duke of Tsāu, and five years later he was admitted as an Associate with Khung-fu-Tsū in divine honours, and his parents had honorific titles conferred on them.

Meng-Tsū accepted all the traditional teachings of Khung that had come down to him, and he added to them explanatory detail and illustration. At the same time, we can note the distinct personal element in the book ascribed to him and bearing his name, and from this we can dissect out his special contribution to the development of Confucian thought.

He believed in the "Kingly Way" (*Wang-Tao*) which the ideal King of his dream always followed; he is always humane and does his work wholly for the good of his people. Society can never consist of equals, for a fundamental difference exists between the Cultured man and the Common man. Yet all men are good at heart, for their mind-and-heart (*hsin*) is given by Heaven, and through this Inner Light they can find the way to Heaven. They naturally act with kindness, because that alone can give them satisfaction. All alike can develop into Sages if they care to tread the path to



Wisdom, for the roots of the four great virtues are in every man.

These virtues are pity (*ts'e yin*), shame or dislike (*hsiu-wu*), the spirit of yielding or adjustment (*ts'u jang*) and the sense of right and wrong, the conscience (*shih fei*). These four develop respectively into the still higher virtues of humanity (*jen*), righteousness (*i*), courtesy or self-control (*li*), and wisdom (*chih*). So within each one of us is the divine light that shines upon the path, as *Light on the Path* (1:12) also tells us, and as Meng-Tsü himself says (13:4): "All things are complete within us." What cannot be attributed to the act of man may be classified as the work of Fate or Destiny.

We are separated from Perfection and from each other only by our own selfish desires (*ssü yü*); when we discard these we at once enter the blissful state called the Absolute (*Chen-Ju*). By getting rid of self, we find ourselves one with the universe. This idea of separateness is called non-sincerity, for it is not true (*ch'eng*); it can be worn out of us by love or simple altruism. This is the Straight Path which leads man to the fullness of his perfection, and it is natural and easy for him to follow, if he only will.

## 5. The Ancient Classics

Though some modern scholars are now doubtful about the ancient tradition that the old Chinese Classics have actually passed through the revising hands of Khung



himself, it is clearly a fact that he or some of his close followers did at some time play a large part in shaping them. We must remember that in ancient times all over the world the individualistic idea was less developed than it is today. People did not care much about whose was the physical hand that actually took pen and wrote a book. What was important was whose were the ideas of the book. So some Confucian or other wrote what he believed to be an honest account of the teachings of his Master, and others then naturally enough, probably to give it greater authority, ascribed it to the Master himself. The same is certainly what happened with Isaiah, the Buddha, Sankarāchārya and the Christian apostles. It is not forgery, but an honest attribution to the presumed source of the inspiration which had guided the writer's pen. The phenomena of automatic writing may well be closely akin to this proceeding.

Ancient books are, in fact, often the work not of individuals but of schools of thought. We must judge them on their intrinsic merits, and not on the name of the alleged author, which is really a matter of far less importance than that ascribed to it in the modern world.

Yet the traditions about the Chinese Classics are very old, and they are quite consistent with one another. There seems little reason to deny that they may well carry some truth. The lower criticism of their texts, and the careful analysis of internal linguistic and historic evidence, have not yet advanced so far as to enable a definite conclusion to be reached. Far too few scholars



with this kind of training have yet turned their minds to the testing of the ancient tradition.

Eight of these important books have come down to us, intact or very nearly so. Four of these are ascribed to the pre-Confucian Age and are said to have been edited and quoted by the Sage himself. Four are ascribed to Khung and his disciples, with a good deal of probability, and then we have some other minor works, together with the Taoist and Buddhist scriptures, the writings of the school of Mo-Tsü and Yang-chu, and a few fragments from the later Chinese followers of Māni (known to them as *Mo-meu-ni*).

The four Ancient Classics, largely commented on by others, formed the basis of Chinese law and social custom. Let us now look at these, for they will help us to understand the mental background of our "Gospel of China" better.

**Shu-Ching**, the "Book of Annals", purports to give contemporary records and speeches of the early Emperors. These are not more historical than the speeches in *Mahābhārata* or in Herodotus and Livy. It is possible, however, says Dr. Y. L. Fung, that a few passages of this Book go back to about B.C. 1000, and that the accounts of Kings Wen and Wu of Chou are really in the main historical. But there seems no doubt whatever that the vast bulk of its matter consists of later "forgeries" or speculations from the age of the Philosopher himself or even later. It seems likely that we have traces here of his reported editing work, putting into the mouths of his characters the sentiments



of his own mind, much as Luke did into the mouths of Jesus, Peter and Paul.

There is a remarkably high ethical tone in these passages, which often declare that rulers hold sway only so long as Heaven's mandate lasts, and that Heaven withdraws its mandate from an unjust or cruel ruler. I quote one short extract from the chapter *Kao-yao-mo*: "What the people see and hear is what Heaven sees and hears. What the people think worthy of reward or punishment is what Heaven will punish or reward. There is a close relationship between Heaven and the people; let those, then, who govern peoples be watchful and careful." A nice way of putting our own saying, "Vox populi, vox Dei." This is attributed to the Emperor Yü of about B.C. 2200: "The people should be cherished and not looked down upon. The people are the root of a country; when the root is firm, the country is at peace." And another chapter gives us: "Heaven compassionates the people; Heaven will be found to give effect to the people's longing." The philosophy of this book, as we have it, is wholly Confucian.

**Shih-Ching**, the "Book of Verses", contains 305 court poems and folk songs, mostly from the Feudal Age (say, B.C. 800-400). They are full of deep humanist wisdom, and often refer back to the great days when King Wu replaced at the head of a popular revolt the corrupt and tyrannous Shang with his own Chou Dynasty (B.C. 1122).

From this book also I quote a few striking passages, because it was so constantly drawn upon by Khung-fu-Tsü



that his own authorship of parts of it may well be suspected in fact: "There is nothing but Heaven's mandate, whose remotest effects never cease." "Because he was an intelligent and careful watcher of events, that is why he preserved his own safety." "Although the fish dives to hide in the water, yet the transparency of the water betrays it and it can be seen entirely." "Take great care to do nothing, even in the most secret place, which could make you blush." "Have the same fear and circumspection as if you saw under your eyes a deep abyss, as if you trod on fragile ice." "Only the prince who inspires joy is the real father and mother of the people." "Let us show kindness to the distant and help those who are near." "Great Heaven is intelligent and is with you in all your going."

**Li-Ching**, the "Book of Rites", is held by Dr. Fung to date from the early Han period (cir. B.C. 180). It lays down in considerable detail the code of social ethics and ceremonial ascribed by this conservatising age to the golden days of the past. But though it may well have been recast by Confucians in that period, it raises many historic problems to suggest that at least its core was unknown to Khung and his age, for it would make countersense of much of his life. The first words are characteristic of the spirit of the whole: "Always and in everything let there be reverence".

**Y-Ching**, the "Book of Changes", is an extremely obscure book of magic, astrology, divination, etc. It is doubtful whether Khung had any real hand



to come from quite a different mental environment. From it you can learn how to observe omens, and how witches and sorcerers are to prepare sacrifices and new buildings.

## 6. The Confucian Classics

The **Ta-Hio** (*Ta-Hsüeh*) "The Great Study," consists of a short treatise always held to be by Khung-fu-Tsü himself until our modern scepticism and incredulity set to work on it, and a commentary on this by Khung's disciple Thseng-Tsü. I am unable to find any substance in the assertion by Dr. Fung that the root-treatise is in fact a later forgery. Science does not consist merely in denial of what has hitherto been held true.

Legge (*Chinese Classics*) seems definite that the book, which he calls *T'ai Hsio*, was probably written by Khung-chi Tsü-sse, the grandson of Confucius, as was also stated by Chiā K'wei in the first century A.D. He is satisfied that the book, more or less in its present form, dates from the 5th century B.C. that is within two generations of the Sage himself.

The book has been of vast significance to Chinese thought. Dr. Ching-Tsü states that it is designed as a gateway for the study of all knowledge. Its subject is the perfecting of the self as the source and power behind all effort to rule or to reform others, and that is the essential content of what knowledge must be attained by man.



In A.D. 1191, Dr. Chou-hi wrote that all men derive their innate character from Heaven, but only some are wise enough to be able to perfect that inner nature and so to shine out among others as their Heaven-sent rulers and teachers. In the elementary schools all alike were taught manners, music, writing, accounting, archery and driving between the ages of eight and fifteen, and then all children of the ruling classes and those who were found fit among their subjects entered the senior school to learn the arts of penetration, of control of feelings, self-correction and the rule of others. Rulers were taught to ask for nothing beyond their daily needs, and so the early Emperors were taken as models for justice, humanity and wisdom, and their subjects as models for modesty and loyalty. The *Ta-Hio* was the text-book in these senior schools.

Now as the Chou Dynasty declined, these good rules of life fell into desuetude, and wise counsels were trampled under foot. In such an age came the saintly Khung, but even he could not find rulers to adopt the noble principles of old that he was teaching, so he had to turn to the editing and transmission of such works as the *Book of Rites*, for the education of children at least in later ages. The Sage's maxims for senior study were transmitted only by the disciple Thseng-Tsū, who also commented on them.

On this book the Buddhists and Taoists of China built their theories of Non-Being and the Void, so says our author, Dr. Chou-hi, and spoke of total Rest and the final Nirvāna, but without true basis in fact. Thus



ignorance and confusion were increased until about A.D. 950, when the rise of the *Sung* Dynasty restored the ideals of good government and education. At this time the *Ta-Hio* was brought forward as the worthy preface to the teachings of Meng-Tsü, now being preached widely. Up to that time it had formed a mere chapter in the *Book of Rites*. It now became the chief source of philosophy and metaphysic. Dr. Chou-hi himself became its commentator and to some extent its editor, though he carefully kept his own annotations and additions quite distinct from the original text as it left Thseng-Tsü's hands.

Thseng-Tsü quotes freely from the *Book of Verses*, and from sayings of Khung-fu-Tsü himself, in explaining the short text left behind by his Master.

The **Chung-Yung**, "Steadiness in the Poise", or "in the Midst". The central part of this book is probably the genuine work of Tsü-Sse, the Sage's grandson, Dr. Fung tells us, though Meng-Tsü does not seem to have known the book in its present form, which probably, Dr. Fung adds, is of Han date.

Legge, in his scholarly treatise, *The Chinese Classics*, is not quite able to forget that he was a missionary; he says he finds the Chung-Yung rather vague and unclear, without precise train of thought, and at times losing itself in a sort of cloudy mysticism. I confess that I am not able to agree with this opinion. But like all other scriptures it requires to be studied *with sympathy*, and a little "penetration", which may not always be



easily found by those whose main work in life must be tainted with polemic opposition.

This is a profound metaphysical treatise, aimed to show that the maxims of Khung were based on the very nature of Man and the world, and that they are therefore changeless and eternal; we cannot abandon them at any time, but must ceaselessly devote ourselves to them as the old Saints did before us. The virtue of humanity is the open door to this Straight Path that leads by stages to Perfection. To perfect the self and others is the supreme duty of all, though it is only the Saint who can know the full details of the Law. This book shows the highest moral purity and an unusually religious tone.

Dr. Ching-Tsū, an early commentator, explains the title thus:—*Chung* is what does not stray to either side, and *Yung* is the changeless. So it means that the Reason is fixed in the Straight Path, or the direct rule of the world. He tells us that Tsū-Sse himself handed the book on to Meng-Tsū, lest in course of time knowledge of the eternal principles be corrupted and forgotten. The first and third parts of the book deal with the control of mind and the state known in Sanskrit as *samādhi*, that lies beyond perfect mental absorption, and the second portion deals with varied topics. The *Book of Verses* is often quoted. Dr. von Plœnckner translates the title as "*der unwandelbare Seelengrund*", "the unshakable basis of souls".

The **Lun-Yu**, "Philosophic Discourses", of which the oldest surviving copy is the precious "Kou-Lun", which dates from the burning of the books by



Shih-hung-Ti in B.C. 213, so we are told, is a valuable collection of sayings and talks between Khung-fu-Tsū and his disciples or the petty rulers of various States, jotted down from oral tradition after several generations. It is full of pithy sayings, rich in ripe wisdom.

When we compare its Khung with the Socrates of Xenophon's book, we find a Sage more human and an account more artless, and therefore presumably more true. He shows no trace of pride or fear, nor does the Sage ever descend to the vulgarity of threats but keeps to gentle persuasion and sweet reasonableness, though he is certainly austere and his rare denunciations are cold in their anger. He has no teachings only for the elect, but one message for all who come to him.

The compiler and later editors have made no attempt to arrange this mass of valuable material, save in Chapter X, where we find a clear picture of the man Khung-fu-Tsū himself. To extract from the book a vivid account of the philosophy therefore requires deep and patient study, though its main ideas are few and clear when dissected out.

The **Meng-Tsu** seems likely to have been compiled by the sage whose name it bears, or at least by one of his own disciples, for it shows several marks of authenticity. It is already quoted by Han-ying and Thung-Chung-shu (B. C. 150 about) in such a way as to show that in their days the *Books of Meng-tsū* were already well known in China. The first commentator



was Chāo-ch'i (cir. 168 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> The teacher was evidently a bolder, a more active and petulant, and a more decided man than his great Master. He more clearly felt the unity of China, and was fearless in reproof of selfishness or tyranny in the rulers of his time, using as his chief weapon a biting irony, while he tried to teach that power must rest only on the love of the people if it is to last.

Meng-Tsū knew the human heart deeply, and had the deepest reverence for it. He travelled about with his seventeen disciples, crusading against vice, but he seems to show more understanding of evil and more sympathy for those indulging it than the cold horror and indignation of Khung-fu-Tsū. He attacks it only with gentle reason or with ridicule, and his style is more elegant, if also more verbose, than his Master's.

## 7. Notes on a few Terms

In Lun-Yu 15 : 17, we read that the Cultured Man (*chün-tsū*) takes righteousness (*i*) as his basic stuff, practises it with courtesy (*li*), brings it forth with modesty (*wen*), and completes it with sincerity or wisdom (*chih*). Let us look for a moment at the significance of these terms :

<sup>1</sup> On the question of authorship Chāo-Ch'i is definite : " (Meng-tsū) withdrew from public life, gathered and condensed the conversations which he had had with his distinguished disciples . . . on the difficulties and doubts which they had expressed, and also compiled his own utterances given spontaneously, and so he published the seven (i.e. 14) books of his writings." (as in Legge, ii, p. 11).



Righteousness (*i*) means much the same as *dharma* in Sanskrit, *āsha* in Avesta, and *dikaioisune* in Greek. It is the quality of obedience to the laws inherent in our own nature, and includes the ideas of justice, purity and self-control, not from any fear of punishment or hope of reward but as an act of simple propriety. Thung-chung-shu puts it thus : " Be correctly righteous without thinking of profits ; be pure in principles without thinking of whether they bring material return." A man of *i* is a man of principle, a man of character, as we should say.

Courtesy (*li*), or good form, gentlemanliness, which alone prevents frankness from degenerating into rudeness, is very essential. It is the quality of self-restraint, gained from the rules of good conduct in society and diligently practised till it becomes a second nature. Combined with *chih*, it produces the Chinese conception of the perfect gentleman. Knowledge of the rites, of ceremonial behaviour, helps one to acquire this nobility of character.

Modesty (*wen*), training or education, is the quality brought by continuous study and practice of the maxims of the wise and of the innate good character of a man. It is this which distinguishes the rustic boor from the scholar or educated man.

Sincerity (*chih*), is what naturally comes straight from the heart. It is not a virtue assumed in order to give others a good impression, but it is the inner goodness that spontaneously bubbles up and overflows. It may not always bring popularity, but certainly no man can



be truly righteous without it, nor can he without it earn the respect of others. It implies straightness, frankness, honesty of word and deed and purpose, and includes the idea of conscientiousness and simplicity in the true sense. With it a man can look the whole world in the face. But to be a virtue in society, it must always go with *li*, good manners.

Filial Piety (*hsiāo*) is an instinctive reverence for authority, and it implies a sense of gratitude to those who protect and guide us—our parents and rulers, and Heaven itself.

*Hsing* is the innate character with which we come into the world. It cannot be changed, but as it is the Heaven-born part of us it is naturally kind and good and is the seat of all other virtues. It needs to be developed into ultimate perfection.

*Hsi* is the acquired character, built in by study and practice. It may be either good or evil, for man may distort his original goodness into ugly shapes of wickedness.

Harmony (*ho*) is the capacity so to tune our lives and natures with our environments that they may harmonise with all. It does not imply opportunism but adaptability, and a sense of unity and gentle compromise which makes for general peace and happiness.

Equilibrium (*chung*) is that middle state between the pairs of opposites wherein a man being evenly balanced finds the deepest peace of the Eternal. It is a state of moveless bliss, hardly to be distinguished from the conception of ecstasy and *samādhi*. The practiser



of *chung* is like the *stithaprajñā* of the *Gītā*, and becomes the *jīvanmukta*.

Humanity (*jen*), the perfect virtue of the human being, is the denial of self, the capacity to put oneself in the place of another, the power to understand with absolute impartiality and so to help truly. The Chinese symbol for the word is made up from the joined symbols for *man* and *two*; that is, it signifies the humane qualities needed for relations between one man and another. It is an enlightened prudence, a universal kindness for men, and is the source of measureless soul-force. It includes our ideas of morality, virtue and propriety, combined with a vivid and spontaneous sympathy. It is a blend of conscientious adherence to the absolute truth (*chung*) and altruism (*shu*), and it takes varying forms in different people, because the natural code of virtue or righteousness is an individual thing.

Absolute Sincerity (*ch'eng*) is the one-pointed perseverance in the truth as seen by each individual. It leads inevitably to the final goal of human life, which is the union of the inner and the outer, dissolving all barriers around the Self. This *ch'eng* may almost be translated as the Real (Skt. *Sat*), for it too is the beginning and end of all things, the one eternal changeless Reality from which all things have come and into which all shall return.

Heaven (*T'ien*), in the times of Khung-fu-Tsü, was used in five significances. (i) It means the *material sky*, as when coupled with Earth in the phrase "Heaven and Earth". (ii) It stands for an *anthropomorphic*



*deity*, as most commonly in the book *Lun-Yu*. (iii) It refers to *Fate* (*ming*) as sometimes in the book *Meng-Tsü*. (iv) It means simply *Nature*. (v) As in GC 11 : 1, it means more like our *Morality*. In this volume it is usually safe to understand it as very near our conception of the Supreme God, who arranges all, guides all, and is served by all.



## SYNOPSIS

### **Chapter One : PORTRAIT OF THE PHILOSOPHER.**

1. Khung (Confucius) was clear and frank, wise and courteous, in his speech. 2. He never dealt with extraordinary things, but through the Scriptures showed how men should live. 3. He greatly loved classical music, which teaches discipline and harmony. 4. He was always rather formal in public, though friendly and cheerful in private. 5. He showed the same respect to gifts as to the giver, and always consecrated them by offering a little first to his ancestors. 6. He was temperate, careful to eat only fresh and clean food, and ceremonious at the time of meals. 7. He wore simple clothing, but observed all the ancient customs in this matter also. 8. In his home life he followed the rules laid down of old ; a natural courtesy and sweetness of humour endeared him to all as he shared the life of the common folk. 9. He always showed sympathy with those in trouble but made light of his own sorrows, so as not to depress others.

**Chapter Two : THE GREAT STUDY.** 10. The purpose of life is to grow in grace, help others, and realise our own perfection. Each can attain that goal for himself by a steady meditation on it, the way to which lies through the understanding of one's motives for action. Those who would rule others must first rule themselves ; a wise and kindly father is the best of kings ; the family is the best training-ground for a kingdom. Impartial justice to all and constant self-training lead to perfection ; if these are neglected no one can attain perfection.

**Chapter Three : ABIDING IN THE POISE.** 11. . We have to study deeply and steadily follow the innate law of our own nature, from which we can never really turn aside. The eternal



state of the true Self is that beyond all thought and feeling. Dwell in that, and come out of it only in disciplined harmonious action. That state, perfected, is the real goal of life. 12. Few can long remain in that blissful state, because few care to tread the path of sincere and humble effort that leads to it, a balance between brave strength and gentleness. 13. All men and women can aim at this, though few, the saints and sages, can attain it perfectly. 14. It is the natural thing for all to do, innate in everyone; for each it is nothing but sincerity in following his own higher nature to the end. Self-control and consideration for others in a mood of dispassionate calm is the way. The whole universe is full of beings thus growing towards perfection. 15. Good men are good rulers, for they are just, humane, and reverent, constantly striving towards self-improvement and so to perfection, for sooner or later all will attain that goal. 16. That perfection is already innate in the Self, reflected in the true intelligence of a pure mind. Only those who know that Inner Self can truly help others and so co-operate with the Divine Plan of the Universe. Others can help as far as they have themselves progressed towards that perfection of Self-knowledge, which brings divine powers to be used only in the delightful unseen helping of others. The Universe is almost infinite, and man's Inner Self is cognate with that and infinitely glorious. That is why the wise man who knows this can be unmoved amid the wild storms of life. 17. A good ruler follows the standard of the best exemplars in the past, which is the same as that of his own higher Self, for the whole Universe is a unity. Only the perfect man can be the worthy lawgiver or ruler of others, awaking loving and joyous loyalty in them. But you can recognise him only through the same qualities in yourself. 18. The wise man finds the world in himself, his own nature in the outer world; though he does not seek fame or publicity, he wins both by his gentle goodness, which works marvels on all around him.

**Chapter Four: PHILOSOPHIC DISCOURSE.** 19. Khung has been gradually gaining wisdom through steady effort all his



life, but even he is still far from the goal. He is always ready to learn from anyone and to share freely what he has, but his pupils must make their own efforts. 20. It is easy to make tall claims, but few really seek the highest truth. Sincerity is the first quality to aim at. 21. The sincere love of others is the highest knowledge, to be steadily cultivated. 22. An earnest quest of this, together with the patient culture of gentle courtesy and commonsense, is the best way of life. 23. Seek the Truth, unswayed by mere opinion, and learn to look under a fair exterior to assess the soul within. 24. It is human nature to be humane, kindly, self-disciplined, but these virtues must be steadily practised if they are to grow and flower. 25. The highest education is that which teaches love, courage, and calm amid all disturbances. 26. This is true culture, true wisdom, to be sought by all through the path of honesty, sincerity, and devotion to the supreme Aim. 27. This is the proper field of education, to create a man self-reliant, kind, gracious, and calm, freed from the ravages of egoism. 28. Devotion to justice and propriety, a patient aspiration towards perfection, a tireless effort to help others and to purify and improve oneself, are also signs of true culture. 29. A simple devoted life among good people makes it easy to tread this path. 30. Kindness, reverence and loyalty to the parents and other elders, gracious kindliness to youngers, reveal the worthy postulant for wisdom. 31. Be honest, faithful and sincere at all costs; only the true can find the Truth and be worthy to pass it on to others. 'You can win love by complete active harmlessness. 32. Each man should do his own duty, leaving others to theirs. The man in power must be careful, wise, calm, disinterested, devoted to his work; his good example will be followed by all below him, even where good laws and preaching totally fail to win them over. 33. Practise the mood of Self-awareness, which instils love for others in our hearts and enables us to help them. Use your own native commonsense at all times, and leave other things to "Destiny". 34. The ideal pupil quietly studies the truth in himself, indifferent to outer



conditions of life, but even in the greatest sorrow never loses his balanced sense of duty. 35. Sincerity and impartial justice do not involve disloyalty to others. Physical action is not the only way of service, but you should always keep your feet on good solid earth and never lose yourself in airy transcendentalism, however grand and alluring it may seem.

**Chapter Five: THE MESSAGE OF MENG-TSU. 36.** The wise man obeys the laws of Nature which silently reveal Heaven's will. He does his best but cannot command success; indeed the best of men are often sorely troubled, for Heaven blesses them with trials that increase their strength. 37. Every human being is naturally kind and pitiful, just, discriminating, and goes astray only under heavy pressure. His growth is measured by the depth and universality these virtues have attained. 38. He can become like a beast if he lacks true education; his first task is to see himself as he is and then to try to rectify himself; none can do this for him. 39. When he has made himself noble, kind, full of sympathy for all, wise and just, he will arouse love and co-operation in all around; then among friends his work will prosper smoothly and happily. The selfish can never win loyalty but only stir up selfishness in others; only loving sympathy can draw others to our side; good words are not so powerful as true feelings of good-will and a good example. 40. When you are hurt by others, the cause must lie in yourself. Set right your own defects, and if the offences do not cease, you need not worry at what an ignoble person does. Be glad that his offences have led you to improve yourself. 41. A human being is naturally humane; in our own hearts we can find the highest Truth if we sincerely search with understanding. To avoid all evil desires and deeds is the way. 42. Do your own duty quietly, without caring for results, for this alone brings the happiness of calm content. 43. The nature of the heart matters more than outer activity; let it be the home of all great virtues—for which it must be trained, purified, and guided. The wise man does not hurt even when hurt himself, but looks on all as brothers, even though



some be nearer and dearer than others ; he looks on everything as worth knowing but some things as to be known at all costs. His life is one of cheerful service and tireless self-improvement. 44. The best man wholly conceals his own greatness, helps others when he can, but is quite happy when he can do nothing for them, and is unshaken by fear, shame, or poverty. His greatness cannot be judged by what he does, but by what he is. 45. Great men perform the common duties more fully than other people do, and give credit for what they are and do to the teacher whom they follow in all humility.







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## CHAPTER ONE

# PORTRAIT OF THE PHILOSOPHER

There are few Scriptures which give us so clear a picture of the Sage or Prophet through whom they have come to the world. By piecing together the references to the personality of Confucius in the nearly contemporary book LUN-YU, we gain a truly living portrait of the great man Khung-fu-tsü (as he is known in China); it brings him vividly before our eyes.

### 1. His Way of Speaking

Khung-tsü was extremely sincere and simple while in his village; he was so modest that he seemed to have no gift of speech. But when he was at the temple (of the ancestors) or (his sovereign's) court he spoke clearly and distinctly, and all that he said was marked with mature thought. At the court he spoke to lower officers firmly and frankly, to higher officers with respect and precision. When



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the Prince was present, he maintained a respectful and dignified manner, grave and self-possessed. (Lun-Yu 10 : 1-2)

Here we meet a quiet and sincere man, who spoke clearly and only after full and deep consideration. Frank and firm to inferiors, courteous to superiors, his natural modesty kept him silent when circumstances allowed. In his own life, he was a pattern of balanced self-control and discipline.

## 2. The Subjects of His Talk

In his discourses, the Sage never spoke of miracles, nor of heroic deeds, nor of civil troubles, nor of spirits.<sup>1</sup> (L. 7 : 20) (He) rarely spoke of profits, of destiny, or of the human race. (L. 9 : 1) The subjects the Sage usually spoke about were the Book of Verses, the Book of Annals, and the Book of Rites ; he constantly dwelt on these. (L. 7 : 17)

His talk was to explain and confirm the Scriptures which were holy to the people of his day, as did also Jesus, Māni and Muḥammed in their turn. Almost his only writing was a commentary on one of these, and in conversation he loved to clinch an argument by some apt quotation from the ancient books of his people. He could hardly be drawn into talk on worldly business, fortune-telling, or the affairs of mankind at large, and had no concern with miracles or ghosts, with politics or

<sup>1</sup> Cha-Hsi says : the mysteries of Nature.



popular heroes of the day. He spoke as man to man and, like his quasi-contemporary the Buddha, refused to indulge in talk which cannot really help men to live a happy useful life in society. This gives his teachings a curiously modern flavour even in our day, after 2500 years.

### 3. His Love of Music

While the Sage was in the State of Tshi (in his 36th year), he heard the tune (Ch'i) named Shao. (L. 7 : 13) He (showed so much emotion at it that) for three months (he) found no taste in food; he said, "I do not think that since this music was composed such a point of perfection could ever have been attained.<sup>2</sup> Can mere bells and drums be called music?" (L. 7 : 11) When (he) found himself with anyone who knew how to sing well, he got him to sing the same piece again, and then he accompanied him with his own voice. (L. 7 : 31)

He took great pleasure in music, the controlled tone and rhythm of which can always be a metaphor for our conduct. Here his taste was severely classical, the ritual modes known to the Ancients being in his eyes a proper model for all time. His own skill in song is delightfully hinted at in the saying that he would join in

<sup>2</sup> Or: I did not imagine that music had reached such perfection as this. (Soothill).



any song he enjoyed. We can compare this taste of his for music with that of the Prophet Māni for painting. It is not very common that Art and Philosophy blend in one person, though examples of such a blending in our own age are Wagner, Croce, and a few centuries ago Leonardo da Vinci.

#### 4. Before the Prince

1. When the Prince called him to (his court and bade him) receive a guest, his manner suddenly changed ; his pace became grave and measured as if he had fetters on the feet<sup>3</sup>. As he saluted those who were near his right or left, his robe always hung straight and neat, both at the front and at the back. He quickened his step (while introducing the guests), and held his arms extended like a bird's wings. When the guest had departed, he made a point of reporting his mission, saying (to the Prince), " The guest is no longer in your presence." (L. 10 : 3-4)

2. When he came in through the palace gate, he bowed his head as though the gate were not high enough to let him pass. He did not pause at all in passing through the gate, nor did he tread upon the threshold as he

<sup>3</sup> His knees as it were bent under him. (S.)



walked. While passing before the throne, his face suddenly changed, and his pace became grave and measured as if he were in fetters. His words seemed as embarrassed as his feet.<sup>4</sup> Taking his robe in both hands, he climbed in that way into the palace hall, bowing the body, and he held his breath as if he dared not breathe. In coming out, after having taken one step he gradually relaxed his serious and respectful expression and took on a smiling air. When he came to the foot of the stairway, letting his robe drop again, he spread out the arms once more like the wings of a bird; but while passing before the throne again his face changed, and his pace became slow and stately as if he had fetters on his feet. (L. 10 : 4)

3. If he were invited by the Prince to dine with him, when that one was about to make an oblation, the Sage was the first to taste of it. If the Prince went to see him when he was ill, he turned his head to the east, put on his court dress, and tied on his most beautiful sash. When the Prince sent for him to himself, he went there on foot without waiting for his carriage to be prepared. (L. 10 : 13)

<sup>4</sup> And words seemed to fail him. (S.)



In the royal presence his gait was slow and dignified, and he was always careful to be neat and tidy. He gave all courtesy to guests when entrusted with the important duty of welcoming them, and made a point of reporting as soon as his duties were at an end.

Indian readers will note his respect for the threshold and his bow on entering any room. His great reverence for the royal presence is often alluded to in order to show his regard for social proprieties. He at once constrained speech and movement until he came out again, when he returned to his natural easy affability.

His respect for the Prince was shown by his eagerness to receive the royal *prasād*, and by assuming a cheerful face and his best robes to receive the royal visitor even when ill. He obeyed all royal summons at once.

## 5. On Exchanging Presents

1. On receiving the ducal mace he bowed deeply as if he were unable to hold up its weight. Then he raised it on high with both hands as if he wished to offer it to someone, and lowered it to the earth as if to return it to someone else, showing in his face and manner an appearance of fear, his pace slowing and quickening like the varying movements of his mind. While offering the usual royal gifts, he had a serious but pleasant expression, while at the time of offering other



gifts his air was even a little more pleasant and attractive.<sup>5</sup> (L. 10 : 5)

2. Whenever the Prince sent him a present of food, he at once made a point of placing it on his table as prescribed and of tasting it. When the Prince sent him a present of raw meat, he always had it cooked and then offered it (to his ancestors). If the Prince sent him a living animal as a gift, he made a point of carefully feeding and looking after it. (L. 10 : 13)

3. If he received gifts from his friends, even if they were chariots and horses, unless he had meat that he could offer as oblation (to his ancestors), he would not thank them by any mark of politeness.<sup>6</sup> (L. 10 : 15)

Here again there is a curiously Indian touch in the Sage's gestures on receiving a gift or any mark of honour. He showed that he admitted all gifts to have come from heaven, for the use of the earth.

Delay in using gifts would imply disrespect to the giver, and this was impossible for the Apostle of perfect Courtesy.

<sup>5</sup> Legge has it : he dragged his feet along as if they were held by something to the ground. In presenting the presents (with which he was charged) he wore a placid appearance. At his private audience, he looked highly pleased.

<sup>6</sup> Or : When a friend sent him a present, though it might be a carriage and horses, he did not bow. The only present for which he bowed was that of the flesh of sacrifice. (L.)



He accepted no gifts from others unless he could offer the due sacrifice to the ancestors before receiving them for his own use.

## 6. The Sage's Food

1. As for food, he did not reject finely cleaned rice or finely minced meat. He never ate of rice (a dish) spoiled by the heat or damp, nor of fish or other flesh that had begun to decay; if its colour were changed or its odour spoiled he did not eat of it; nor did he eat if it had lost its flavour or were out of season. Nor did he eat the meat that was not cut straight, or a dish which lacked the proper sauce . . . If the wine or dried meat were bought in a public market he did not take it. (But) he did not abstain from ginger in his food. (L. 10 : 8)

2. He never ate much; . . . even when he had been served with plenty of meat he made it a habit never to take more of it than of his rice. . . He never took for his drink enough to disturb his mind . . . Even when he accepted only a little coarse rice and vegetables or broth, he always offered a little of it as oblation or libation; and he



performed this ceremony with all due respect and solemnity. . . . When the sacrifices were offered in the Prince's palace, he did not keep even for a night the meat that came to himself ; when he himself offered there the meat-offerings to his ancestors, he did not pass three days without serving it, for if three days were passed it could no longer be eaten. While eating, he did not at all continue talking. (L. 10 : 8)

What is all this, in a Scripture, we may ask ? But it is just in these matters of daily life and discipline that the truly social religion actually consists. And the message of Khung-fu-tsū was intended just to teach men how to live together ; as example is better than precept, we have here a full account of the example left by the Sage for others to follow. He adhered to a simple but cleanly diet, rejecting the high flavours of putrescent food said to be always popular in China. He did not take unseasonable fruits because they are unnatural, and so against the rites. He refused things from the open market because they might be stale or dirty. But he was no faddist, nor did he condemn a reasonable use of flavourings ; nor was he a vegetarian. Indeed, in later years it was largely their strict vegetarianism that brought down on the followers of Māni the harsh persecution that finally destroyed their church, because their practices seemed a silent criticism of Khung-fu-tsū.

He took both meat and wine in moderation, after due prayer or consecration (cf. GI 87, GJ 43, 123) of whatever he ate or drank, whether coarse or simple. He also shared the ancient Indian and Essene practice of silence at meals.



## 7. The Sage's Dress

1. On fasting days he constantly covered himself with a white linen robe. In the same days of (semi-) fasting he always changed his mode of living and . . . the place where he was accustomed to eat. (L. 10:7) The Sage never wore clothes faced with purple or dark blue, nor did he ever make his ordinary dress of red or crimson stuff.<sup>7</sup> In the hot season he wore a robe of fine or coarse material, under which he always put another (to pad out the first). His black (winter) robe was lined with black lambskin, his white robe with deerskin, his yellow robe with foxskin. (L. 10:6)

2. For a long time the robe he wore at home had<sup>8</sup> the right sleeve cut short. In his house he wore thick clothes made of fox-fur. His night-dress was always half as long again as his body. Save in the times of mourning, nothing prevented him from wearing the usual ornaments in his sash. He did not go to pay condolence visits in (a robe adorned

<sup>7</sup> Colours used by girls in their dress.

<sup>8</sup> His undress fur gown was long, with. . . (S.).



with) dark lambskin or a black cap. Unless he were wearing the "Wei-chang", (the proper garment for sacrificial ceremonies), his robe was always a little shaped at the waist. Every New Moon Day he would put on his court dress and proceed to the palace. (L. 10 : 6)

His dress was adjusted to the occasion, a white mourning dress being worn during fasts (but cf. GJ 85 : 3), but he never put on gaudy-coloured robes. Lambskin was used at court, deer-skin on embassy, and fox-fur for sacrifices.

The shorter right sleeve facilitates eating and other acts performed by the right hand ; the long night-dress ensures decency during the unconsciousness of sleep. His care to show sympathy even by his dress when on condolence visits is a rather beautiful feature. White, not black, is the mourning dress in China.

## 8. The Sage at Home

1. The Sage sometimes fished with a rod, but never with a net ; he hunted birds with an arrow, but not with snares.\* (L. 7 : 26) When his stable was burned down, (he) said on returning to the court, "Has it hurt any man?" He did not worry himself about the horses. (L. 10 : 12)

\* When shooting, he did not aim at a resting bird. (S.)



2. If the mat were not spread out correctly, he would not sit down on it. (L. 10 : 9) While taking his rest on the bed, he did not speak at all. (L. 10 : 8) When he went to sleep, he did not take the posture of a dead man ; (L. 10 : 16) when he climbed into his chariot, he stood erect with the mounting-strap in his hands . . . and he did not look behind nor speak hastily ; he never pointed with his fingers. (L. 10 : 17)

3. When he was at home he put off his usual seriousness. (L. 10 : 16) The Sage was lovable and attractive at the first sight ; his gravity was without stiffness, and the dignity of his manner inspired boundless respect.<sup>10</sup> (L. 7 : 37) (He) was wholly free from four things : he had no conceit<sup>11</sup>, prejudices, stubbornness or egoism. (L. 9 : 4) When he found himself at leisure, how sweet and persuasive were his manners, how pleasant and attractive his air ! (L. 7 : 4)

4. When he sent to someone in other States, he bowed (to the messenger) twice and

<sup>10</sup> Or : The Master was mild, and yet dignified ; majestic, and yet not fierce ; respectful, and yet easy. (L.)

<sup>11</sup> Or : preconceptions.



went with him for some distance. When K'cang-tsü<sup>12</sup> sent him a certain medicine, he received it with a gesture of acknowledgment but said, "Khieu does not know this medicine well enough; he dare not taste it." (L. 10:11) If anyone prepared a splendid feast to receive him, he never failed to change expression as he rose. (L. 10:16)

5. When thunder suddenly made itself heard or when violent winds arose, he always changed expression. (L. 10:16) When he went into the great temple of the ancestors he observed everything carefully. (L. 10:14) When the people of his village held the "No"-procession to drive away evil spirits, he put on his court robes and sat among the assistants in the east.<sup>13</sup> (L. 10:10)

This looks like the play of a sporting instinct, refusing mass slaughter while allowing the chances of individual killing. In disaster he cared little for his own losses, but only for the danger to other people.

We see here again the precise orderliness and discipline of his life, even in little details. Talking in bed disturbs sleep, lying flat on the back is ill-omened,

<sup>12</sup> The minister of Duke Ai of Lu, also called Chi Khang.

<sup>13</sup> In the winter, villagers went in a noisy crowd to all the houses seeking for demons and driving away pestilence. Khung stood "on the eastern steps" to show his approval, this being the place taken by the host.



and a slovenly posture in public cannot be tolerated in the great.

At home we see Khung as a lovable, kindly man, easy in his manners, unselfish, accommodating, dignified and gracious.

He found a polite way even in refusing a gift or accepting an invitation to dinner. Suavity never failed him.

He showed respect to the great powers of Nature, took interest in the local religious ceremonies, and played his own allotted part in them. This, although he himself gave little importance to spirits.

## 9. His Sympathy for Others

1. If one of his friends had just died, leaving no one to perform the funeral rites for him, he would say, "The care of his funeral belongs to me!" (L. 10 : 15) When (he) found himself at table with a mourner, he could not eat to satisfy his own appetite. On the day of mourning he could not sing. (L. 7 : 9)

2. If anyone paid him a visit while he wore mourning, even if it were one of his closest acquaintance, he never failed to change his expression and to take up a suitable posture. (L. 10 : 16) When (he) saw anyone in



mourning dress or wearing official cap and robe (a magistrate), or a blind man, even when he was younger than himself (and) (L. 9 : 9) though he himself wore only his ordinary clothes<sup>14</sup>, he always showed him deference and respect ; (L. 10 : 16) he rose at his approach, or if he passed before him (seated), he quickened the pace. (L. 9 : 9) When he met someone in mourning, he got down from his carriage and saluted him<sup>15</sup> ; he acted in the same way when he met those who carried the census tablets. (L. 10 : 16)

He was quick in sympathy for the bereaved, sharing even their loss of appetite, and eager to help in funeral rites.

He met death with all reverence whenever he saw it. He showed equal respect to the blind, to the magistrates, and to those who carried the name-tablets. When others came to condole with him in his turn, he put on a cheerful air so as not to infect his visitor with gloom.

Indeed, we may sum up the Portrait of the Sage by saying that he was a perfect gentleman and tried always to live among others as an elder brother would live in a well-guided family.

<sup>14</sup> Or : even though not in public. (S.)

<sup>15</sup> Or : he bowed forward to the cross-bar of his carriage. (L.)



## CHAPTER TWO

# THE GREAT STUDY

### 10. The Heart of Khung-Tsu's Teaching

This pregnant little treatise is one of the few writings ascribed by most authorities, following Chû-Hsi, to the Sage's own hand, though some ascribe it to his grandson. It is therefore of great value to the student of World Religion. It was largely commented on and illustrated by his disciple Tsheng-tsü, and the footnotes appended in this book of ours are necessarily based on that commentary, which now forms part of the First Confucian Classic TA-HIO, and was until very recently the gateway to all Chinese education.

Indeed, its message is still of vital import; its loss would impoverish the world. And any educational system which fails to inculcate such wisdom is truly worthless—nay, a menace to social life.

Impartiality, strenuous effort in self-improvement, and the careful study of one's own motives, are a true basis for righteous conduct. The principle that only the self-controlled can wisely control others must be the foundation of all good government. Its neglect in our modern pseudo-democracies is the cause of corruption, injustice, and war.



1. The law of the Great Study (or of practical philosophy) consists in developing and bringing to light the (shining principle of the) Heaven-born Reason (a), in renewing men (b), and fixing their final goal in perfection (or the supreme good) <sup>1</sup> (c).

Thus the foundation of Chinese Philosophy and Education is declared to be: Study and cultivate the divine Intelligence in yourself, help others, and teach them also to aim at that perfection which is the common good of all. Is not this seeking of the perfection of each one in his own line the "individual uniqueness" once spoken of by Krishnamurti? Each has to tread his own path to the perfecting of his own nature, as he is enabled to glimpse that in the poise and hush of his own heart.

(a) Or: moral sense, The "Shu-Ching" calls this "the shining gift of the intelligence". It is the divinest part of man, enabling him to discern right and truth, and uniting him to all humane and kindly qualities, but clouded over by desire.

(b) The words "Renew yourself completely every day" were written up in the bath-room of the ancient King, Ching-thang. This was a reminder to let the flowing water carry away stains and regrets of the past and to come out daily into the world as a new man, fresh and clean, with high aspirations. Another reading has "to love the people".

(c) The Saint's or Sage's work is to fulfil his own *swadharma* according to his own particular sphere of life. Every good man will aim at this goal. Thus the King will show kindness to all his people, the subject due respect for authority, the son filial piety, the father tenderness to his children, the business man sincerity and good faith, the Sage (like Chü-kung in B. C. 1150) introspection, self-improvement, desire for perfection, and noble conduct. So also Wen and Wu, the great Emperors of olden time, divided their lands equally among the people, giving 500 square yards of land to each one.

<sup>1</sup> Or: to rest in the highest excellence. (L.)



2. First must be known the goal at which one ought to aim, and after that a resolve must be taken. The resolve having been taken, one can then have the spirit<sup>2</sup> tranquil and calm. The spirit being tranquil and calm, one can then enjoy that moveless peace which nothing can disturb. Having come to enjoy that moveless peace which nothing can disturb, one can then through contemplation form for oneself a judgment on the essence of things. Having through contemplation formed for oneself a judgment on the essence of things, one can then attain to the desired state of perfection.

Here the path to perfection is laid down clearly in five stages, each characterised by one of the great qualifications :—(a) knowledge of the Goal (*viveka*), (b) resolve to attain it (*mumukshattva*), (c) calmness of mind (*shānti*), (d) steady peacefulness (*sthitiprajnyatā*) and (e) wise insight (*jnyān*). Of course, these Sanskrit equivalents are barely exact. Students of Buddhism and the Vedānta may be interested in comparing these five with the requirements laid down in those great systems of thought.

Having once seen the nature of your own ultimate perfection, you find naturally arising in you an intense longing for it, and out of that longing grows the determination to attain it. This gives you the calmness of a known purpose and a clear mind, aware that it will

<sup>2</sup> Or : mind.



inevitably achieve its goal. The calmness deepens into unshakeable peace among the storms and disillusionments of life, balanced amid the swirling pairs of opposites. And out of this steady poise grows the clear insight into the real nature of the Self and of the Universe, which is Gnōsis or true Knowledge. Thus perfection is attained.

3. Natural beings have one root and several branches ; human actions have one cause and several effects. To know what comes first and what comes last, is to draw very near to the rational method whereby one attains to perfection.

The Many derive from the One. At the bottom of all we find a Unity. The search for that Unity, and the tracing of its growth into Multiplicity, is the process of thought which leads to true knowledge, and so to the universal goal. To understand that many good acts arise from one good motive, that many sins derive from one evil desire, is to understand human life. To convert the evil desire into a good aspiration is to cut off evil at the root and to prevent injustice and suffering instead of feebly trying to punish them.

4. Princes of olden days who wished to develop and bring to light, in their States, the shining principle of the Reason which we have received from Heaven, first devoted themselves to governing their Kingdoms well. Those who wished to govern their Kingdoms well first set themselves to establish good order in their



families (*d*). Those who wished to set good order in their families first devoted themselves to self-correction (*e*). Those who wished to correct themselves (of evil passions) first devoted themselves to planting uprightness in

(*d*) The qualities needed for great fields of labour, for great responsibilities, can best be won in the smaller sphere of your own home. If you cannot live rightly in your own family, acting wisely and kindly as father, son, husband, wife, mother, daughter, brother, sister, servant, to those who share the house with you, how can you be a wise ruler or a loyal subject in the larger sphere of the nation, containing thousands whom you can never personally know? (cf. GJ 82). The man who kicks his servant and sells his child into an early marriage cannot preach social reform, however eloquent his tongue.

The head of the State is but the head of a big family, as is the Headmaster of a school, or the Manager of a business firm. To him we owe filial piety, deference to our elders, and the tenderest kindness to our youngers. The Headmaster who feels less than this to his pupils is unfit to rule a school.

If a single family enjoys perfect relationships within itself, the whole nation will be kind and happy; if a thousand men can live together in courtesy and mutual restraint, a million men can live together in the same way. But if a nation's ruler is selfish or cruel, the whole nation will be in disorder and greedy of conquest.

First practise the virtues yourself, then others will gladly follow your example; if you are not yourself kind, loving and patient, you can never bring out these qualities in other men. As the *Book of Verses* puts it: "The Prince whose conduct is always full of equity and wisdom will see the men of the world's four quarters copy his righteousness."

(*e*) The commentator here points out the extreme rarity of true impartiality; hardly any can love and yet admit the defects of the beloved, or hate and yet admit the good points of the one hated. Yet one who is partial can never maintain justice in his family; equity depends wholly on self-control and on an objective viewpoint.



their souls (*f*). Those who wished to plant uprightness in their souls first devoted themselves to making their intentions pure and sincere (*g*). Those who wished to make their intentions pure and sincere first devoted themselves to perfecting their moral sense as far as possible ; and perfecting as far as possible the moral sense consists in entering and thoroughly examining the principles of action (*h*).

Those who would rule others well must first make their own families a pattern ; to do this, they must

(*f*) To gain self-control, you must never be carried away by anger, fear, joy or sorrow, but dwell calm in the midst of events, however world-shaking these may seem to be. The uncontrolled man cannot see, hear or taste truly ; his senses deceive him, and he can never dispense justice.

(*g*) You must intently watch your inmost thoughts and see if you naturally turn from evil and towards good. The bad man may pretend to virtue before the good, but one who knows how to read motives truly can at once discern his real nature ; his pretence is vain before such a one. As wealth adorns a house, so virtue the person ; in such a state of pure happiness both soul and body grow great and pure. Chû-hsi says that " the proper essence of the Intelligence is to be enlightened ", and its powers are developed by the perfecting of the moral sense. Some are enlightened by themselves and without effort ; it is these who can help others while themselves rapidly advancing towards the highest virtue.

(*h*) The moral sense can be perfected only by a deep study of our actions and of the motives that lead to them. This study will reveal the essential nature of all beings, the one cause for existence. As its field is all but infinite, the study of philosophy is still incomplete and is added to in every age. As it is easier to study actions than their ultimate causes, this course is prescribed, with the assurance that after a certain point the study of actions does reveal clearly the true hidden principles of all action, and then it fully unveils the nature of every human action.



rectify themselves, by taking highest virtue as their own standard, which requires purity and honesty of purpose. But only a high moral sense makes this sincerity with oneself possible, and that can only be developed by a constant awareness of all we do and of all our motives in doing it. Here again we recognise a phrase of Krishnamurti's (*constant awareness*). Good government depends solely on the intelligence and character of the ruler; it cannot be attained by any legislative changes or pompous declarations. He who sets himself right by that very act sets society right (cf. GJ 51), or as Krishnamurti once put it, "The individual problem is the world problem." There is no cheap way to good government; the path to it lies only through self-discipline and self-purification, as Gandhiji says. (cf. Dhammapada, 12 : 3)

5. The principles of action having been entered and thoroughly examined, the moral sense then attains to its highest stage of perfection; the moral sense having attained to its highest stage of perfection, the intentions are then made pure and sincere; the intentions being made pure and sincere, the soul then is penetrated by integrity and uprightness; when the soul is penetrated by integrity and uprightness, the personality is then corrected and bettered; the personality being corrected and bettered, the family is then well guided; the family being well guided, the Kingdom is then well governed; and when the Kingdom is



well governed, the world then enjoys peace and good harmony (2).

This paragraph repeats the ideas of the last in reverse order, showing that he who thoroughly knows his own motives for action can alone secure good government and the peace of the world.

6. To be equal to all, from the son of Heaven to the most humble and obscure, the correcting of oneself is the basic foundation (of all progress and of all moral development).

(2) The people will act in their turn as their ruler acts; if he is lawless, so will they be; if he is just, they will not be unjust. So we should not do to others below us what we resent in those above us; it is only by treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves that righteousness and happiness can prevail (cf. GJ 13 : 6, 51, and GI 86). And this Golden Rule is called the "reason and rule of all actions". When it becomes the motive of all our actions, we are very near the perfection of our being. Our commentator quotes: "The prince who inspires joy is he who is the father and the mother of the people," loving what the people love and sharing their aversions. Power and empire depend on the affection of the people, which alone brings the ruler the blessing of the Most High. It is delightful to find this in his text, "The will of Heaven subsists in the people." Compare this with our own saying, so little revered to-day, "Vox populi, vox Dei" (The voice of the people is God's voice).<sup>3</sup>

Thus one who seeks power and wealth is warned that he can enjoy them only if his own character wins the trust and love of others; otherwise obtained, they can only be a snare and fleeting as morning mists. That is why the purity of means is of equal importance with a high aim. Tyranny and violence in the ruler only stir up violence and cruelty in the people. The Prince attains what will establish his rule only through sincerity and good faith, and he loses it by pride and violence. The people of a virtuous Prince will always love justice, and that will ensure the prosperity of the Prince himself, for they will gladly protect him from all wrong and from every foe. Thus the secret of success in all rulership is the possession of a high moral character. (cf. *Gita*, 3 : 21)

<sup>3</sup> Meng-tsu (7 : 2 : 14) has it, "The people is the first importance, the kingdom the next, and the ruler the last."



7. It is not in the nature of things that one who has his basic foundation in disorder can have what necessarily derives from it in proper order. To treat lightly what is the main or most important, and seriously what is only secondary, is a line of action never followed.

The basis of all true morality is here beautifully defined as complete impartiality and self-improvement. No Socialist of our days could seek a better description of this impartiality than is given by this Chinese Sage of 2500 years ago; it is still far above the attainment of all save the noble few among us, though taught equally by the Sages of Ancient India (also cf. GI 80, 86).

The treatise closes with a warning that he whose basic foundation is out of order cannot himself be in order, nor can his life be full of harmony or wisdom. If our very light has become darkness, then how shall we see? (cf. GJ 74) The wise man attends to his foundation, knowing that only when that is strongly laid can his house stand (cf. GJ 98). It is only the fool who considers trivial adornments such as wealth and fortune or good fame as more important than the fundamental moral character on which all depends.



## CHAPTER THREE

# ABIDING IN THE POISE

### 11. Tsu-Sse's Doctrine

This whole chapter is derived from the CHUNG-YUNG (Constancy in the Middle Path, or Steadiness in the Point of Balance), the second of the four great Confucian Classics. Written by Tsü-Sse, grandson of the Sage, and later arranged by Chü-Hsi, it shows how the metaphysical basis of his philosophy is the very nature of Man and the law of the whole Universe. Dr. Pauthier compares this concept with those of Epictetus, Aristotle and Marcus Aurelius; several aspects of it remind me personally with great force of the Advaita Vedānta and of the teachings of "Hermes".

1. Heaven's mandate<sup>1</sup> is called "Rational Nature"; the principle that leads us to conform our actions with the Rational Nature<sup>2</sup> is called the "Straight Path"; the unified system of this Straight Path is called the "Teaching of Duties" (by the Sages).

<sup>1</sup> Or : gift.

<sup>2</sup> Or : what conforms to nature (*Cheng*).



Tsü-Sse begins with definitions, and thus outlines his teaching. In the more familiar Deistic language we have: "God's gift is the conscience, which is our divine inner nature which we should follow. What aligns our conduct with that conscience is Morality." The phrase "The Straight Path" is used in the same sense throughout the Qur'ān, is referred to by the Christ when he declared his own life to be the "Way" (Jn. 14 : 6), not dogma, but example ; it is an inevitable metaphor of the spiritual life and found in almost every scripture, (e.g. G H 40 : 7).

2. The Straight Path is so inevitable that one cannot swerve aside from it in any point for a single moment ; if one could swerve aside from it, it would no longer be an immutable rule of conduct. That is why the cultured man<sup>3</sup> attentively watches in his heart over the principles that are not discerned by all and meditates carefully on that which is not yet proclaimed and admitted as doctrine.<sup>4</sup>

The Path for each depends on his own inner nature, so it can never really be forsaken ; an inescapable urge would drive the wanderer back to it at once. Sin, as the violation of *swadharma*, is really impossible to man, for the guide to every action is the very nature of the man himself, which is "conscience". Each man does what he is compelled to do by his own inner being and by trends set up therein by infinite urges not now traceable. The truly cultured man, here pregnantly defined by the discerning commentator as "the one

<sup>3</sup> Or : he who is identified with the Straight Path.

<sup>4</sup> Or : careful when unobserved and apprehensive when unheard (*Cheng*).



identified with the Straight Path", (cf. *Light on the Path*: "Before you can tread that Path, you must yourself become the Path"), studies that inner nature, as the old Greek gnomon has it "Know yourself" (cf. GJ. 103 : 1). It is only the loving man can know love, only the moral man can practise or understand morality. We cannot do anything against our own nature. And the real nature of all is divine, heaven-born. That is why all men are naturally good and kind (cf. § 37 : 1); desertions of that standard, being unnatural, can only be brief and shallow aberrations; we are soon hurled back to our centre.

3. (To the Sage) nothing is more evident than the things hidden in the secret recess (of the conscience); to him nothing is more manifest than the subtlest (causes of action). That is why the cultured man attentively watches over the secret movements of his conscience.<sup>5</sup>

The Sage naturally looks within, and his inner nature and motives are clearer to him than the brightest phenomena of the outside world. What is dark to the world is day to him; what is light to others is the night for him (cf. *Gītā* 2 : 69).

4. The state one is in before joy, satisfaction, anger, sadness, arise in the mind is called "Poise". The state one is in when once they have arisen in the mind and before they have gone beyond a certain limit is called "Harmony." This Poise is the great

<sup>5</sup> Or : is watchful over himself when he is alone. (L.)



fundamental basis of the world, and Harmony is its universal and eternal Law.

Tsū-Sse refers here to the state of moveless peace (cf. § 10 : 2) known as *samādhi*, or superconsciousness. It is a bliss of non-thought, non-feeling, beyond the mind and not below it, the "silent Abyss, the Basis which rests upon itself", where alone God can be found, as Dr. John Tauler tells us in his Sermons, wherein is neither Time nor Space, but only the Divine Light. This is the "natural state" of the Advaitin, the "peace that passes understanding" of the Christian, the true "peace of Islām" of the Muslim, that can be known only when the petty ego has surrendered to the "Lord of all worlds". It can be realised, but not described in words. It is not strange that Legge cannot understand.

This state is the eternal Bliss out of which the worlds arose, the silent womb of Life, the dark cavern of the heart wherein the mystic Christ is born, the "Incomprehensible Silence" of Simon Magus (*ap. Hippolytus*). When feelings are born therein, when outer consciousness begins to return, God or the Soul "creates" that constant rhythm of adjustment, that flow of vibrant waves, which our author calls the "Harmony". One is aware of this soft rhythm for hours after a dip into the ocean of Silence. This constant awareness and adjustment of the within and the without is the universal Law, whereby the universe is maintained. At-one-ment with that Law is the way to true immortality, which is of course not personal, in any egoistic sense.

5. When the Poise and Harmony are carried to the point of perfection, Heaven and Earth are in a state of perfect tranquillity



and all beings receive their full development.

True peace and happiness in the growth of the inner real nature can only come when Man consciously lives in that Poise ("between mind and heart", as Krishnamurti puts it), and moves out of it only through that balanced Harmony which is the true law of social and personal morality, the mark of the truly cultured man. And culture must come from this inner source; it cannot be imparted by another, or through any code of conduct.

## 12. Khung-Tsu Explains This

1. *The Sage said*: The man of higher virtues rests moveless in the Poise; the common or unprincipled man is ever opposed to this changeless Poise. Oh, how admirable is the limit of perseverance in the Poise! There are very few men who know how to keep themselves therein for a long time! (C. 2 : 3)

2. The Straight Path is not followed; I know the reason for that. Educated men go beyond it, the ignorant do not attain it. The Straight Path is not clear to everyone, I know; men of strong virtue go beyond it, while those of weak virtue do not reach it. There is not one man who does not eat and



drink, but very few of them know how to distinguish the flavours! How deplorable it is that the Straight Path is not followed! (C. 5 : 4)

3. How great were Shun's wisdom and penetration! He loved to question men and to think over carefully in himself the replies of those who drew near to him; he concealed the bad things and gave out the good. Taking the two extremes of the latter, he only used the mean of them towards the people. It was in so acting that he became Shun the Great! Every man says, "I know how to discern (the motives of human action)," but presumes too much (on his knowledge); dragged on (by his pride), he soon falls into a snare, a trap, or a pitfall he does not know how to avoid. Every man says, "I know how to discern (the motives of human action)", but if he chooses persevering in the Straight Path, (equally far from the extremes) he cannot keep himself there even for the space of a moon. Hwei, he was a man indeed! He chose the state of persevering in the Straight Path (equally far from the extremes). Once he gained a virtue, he clung firmly to it, cultivated it within him, and never lost it. (C. 6 : 8)



4. States . . . can be governed justly, honours and rewards can be refused, means of gain and profit<sup>6</sup> can be trampled underfoot ; but perseverance in the Straight Path, equally far from the extremes, cannot be maintained ! (C. 9)

5. *Tsü-lu*<sup>7</sup> asked his master about manliness. The Sage replied : Are you asking about manliness in the southern lands, or manliness in the northern lands ? Do you speak about your own manliness ? To be kind and gentle in teaching others, to pity the fools who rebel against reason,—that is the manliness of the south, and it is to that the Saint adheres. To lie down on weapons and leather armour, to face death without a tremor—that is the manliness of the north, and it is to that the Heroes adhere. And yet how much stronger and greater is the power of the cultured man who always lives at peace (with men) and never lets himself be weakened (by passions) ! How much stronger and greater is the power of him who stands unswerving in

<sup>6</sup> Or : naked swords. (L.)

<sup>7</sup> Tsü-lu, one of the foremost disciples of the Sage, stands out among the others for his bravery and impetuous nature. He was later a good magistrate in P'u, and was slain in battle at the age of 63, defending his Ruler against a revolt.



the Straight Path, without turning to either side! How much stronger and greater is the power of him who, when his country rejoices in his good government, never lets himself be corrupted or blinded by a foolish pride!<sup>8</sup> How much stronger and greater is the power of him who, when his country is lawless and without good government, rests unmoved in virtue until death! (C. 10)

6. To search into the nature of things withheld from human intelligence,<sup>9</sup> to do wonders that seem superhuman, in order to win oneself admirers and followers in the centuries to come: that is what I would never do. The good man applies himself wholly to following and studying the Straight Path; to go half the way and then drop out is an action I would never copy. The good man naturally perseveres in the practice of the Poise, (without swaying to either side). To flee the world, to be unseen and unknown of men, and yet to feel no pain thereat,—all this is possible only to the Saint. (C. 11)

The words of the Sage himself are now quoted to throw light on Tsü-Sse's statement of his teaching.

<sup>8</sup> Or: change from what he was in retirement. (L.)

<sup>9</sup> Or: to live in obscurity, and yet. (L.)



He says that the highest life is that of absolute constancy in this poise, but it is very difficult to attain such steadiness.

We either exceed or fall short of that ideal balance, so it is only very few can follow the Straight Path though it is to be found even in ordinary things. (cf. GJ 107 : 2).

A King earns the title of "the Great" by his wise moderation in all things and by a free democratic approach to his people for consultation ; a disciple becomes his Master's favourite (cf. § 34) by perseverance in this "golden mean", clinging to and enlarging every virtue in its turn. It is easy to *talk* of the Way of the Midst, but very hard to tread it,—hard as walking on a razor edge across a gusty gorge.

It is indeed the hardest thing in all the world.

The courage of the wild north and the gentleness of the civilised south are both noble ideals and worthy for men to follow, but far greater is he who combines them both in himself, preserving a perfect balance between the Hero and the Saint, between strength and gentleness. The spiritual power of such a one as takes no pride in success and feels no shame in failure can never be overcome.

It is childish folly to draw attention to oneself by the use of miracles, for the only course worthy of the wise is to study and follow this perfect Way of unshaken calm. None of the great Teachers of the world, save (we are told by later followers) Jesus, ever tried to claim a hearing for himself by performing miracles ; their only sanction is the inherent reasonableness and helpfulness of what they say.



### 13. The Straight Path

1. The Straight Path is of so wide a use that it can be applied to all men's actions, but it is of so subtle a nature that it is not clear to all.<sup>10</sup> Even the most ignorant of the crowd, men and women, can attain the simple knowledge of how to behave well . . . and can practise this Rule (of Moral Conduct in its more general and common aspects); but, not even those who have reached the highest degree of saintliness can attain to the perfection of this moral science<sup>11</sup> . . . (or) to the perfection of this Rule of Moral Conduct.<sup>12</sup> (C. 12)

2. Heaven and Earth are doubtless great, yet still man finds imperfections in them. That is why the Sage, in speaking of the higher things of the Path in men, says that the world cannot contain them; and in speaking of its lesser heights he says that nothing in the world can divide them. (C. 12)

<sup>10</sup> Or : The way which the superior man pursues reaches far and wide, and yet is secret. (L.)

<sup>11</sup> *Commentator* : There always remains something which goes beyond the noblest mind on this earth.

<sup>12</sup> *Commentator* : There is still something which one cannot yet practise.



3. The Rule of Moral Conduct in men is the law of all intelligences; it enlightens all in the highest heaven as in the deepest abyss! The Rule of Moral Conduct in the Sage has its essence in the heart of all men, whence it rises to its highest glory in order to enlighten Heaven and Earth with its glorious rays! (C. 12)

All, even the lowest and humblest, can to some extent follow this Path of Balance and Harmony, but not even the saintliest can practise it perfectly, for being divine its scope is infinite.

Nothing physical is wholly perfect; moral and spiritual perfection goes beyond the world of material things, being infinitely vast and infinitely refined.

The whole universe of mind is enlightened by this universal Law, which is latent in the heart of every man (cf. Jn. 1 : 9 and GI 3) and grows brighter until it sheds its light through all the universe, each soul becoming a spiritual sun, as it were.

## 14. Keeping to the Straight Path

1. *The Sage has said*: The Straight Path (or the Rule of Conduct to be followed) is not far from men. If men took a rule of conduct (remote from them—that is to say, one) which does not conform with their own



nature,—it should not be considered as a rule of conduct. The *Book of Verses* says: "The artisan who cuts out an axe-handle . . . does not have his model far from him." Taking up the model . . . , he looks at it from side to side, and after having made the new handle he examines them both to see if they still differ from one another. (C. 13 : 1-2)

2. He whose heart is straight and who has the same feelings for others as he has for himself, does not swerve from the moral law (of duty laid down for men by their rational nature); he does not do to others what he would not like them to do to himself. The rule for the Sage lays on him four great obligations; as for me I cannot even wholly fulfil one of them . . . The exercise of these constant eternal virtues:—carefulness in everyday words, not neglecting any effort to arrive at the full performance of duties, not letting out a flood of needless words, and doing one's best that words and works may correspond to each other—in acting thus, how should the Sage not be sincere and true? (C. 13 : 3-4)

3. The wise man acts according to the duties of his condition without desiring



anything foreign to it . . . He always keeps over himself enough control to carry out the duties of his position, in whatever position he finds himself. If he is in a high rank, he does not tease his subordinates ; if he is in a low rank, he does not worry his superiors by mean and greedy begging. He always keeps to the right and asks nothing of men ; then the peace and serenity of his soul are untroubled. He does not murmur against Heaven, nor does he blame men for his misfortunes. That is how the Sage always keeps his soul calm and at peace while awaiting the fulfilment of heavenly destiny. The man who is astray from the path of duty hurls himself into a thousand rash schemes to seek what he ought not to obtain.<sup>13</sup> (C. 14)

4. *The Sage has said* : How vast and deep are the faculties of Nature's subtle forces ! We try to see them and cannot see them ; we try to hear them and do not hear them ; identical with the essence of things, they cannot be separated from it.<sup>14</sup> Yet they make men in all the universe purify and sanctify

<sup>13</sup> Or : Some lucky chance.

<sup>14</sup> Or : yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them.



their heart and put on their festal robes to offer sacrifices (and oblations to their ancestors). It is an ocean of subtle minds! They are everywhere, above us, to our left, to our right, they surround us on every side! Yet, subtle and imperceptible as they are, these spirits reveal themselves (in the embodied forms of beings); their essence being a true essence, it cannot but reveal itself under some form or other. (C. 16)

5. Heaven, continually producing beings, certainly gives them their development according to their own natural tendencies. It makes the standing tree grow and develops it. It dries the fallen tree and turns it to dust. The great virtue of Sages brings them Heaven's mandate to govern men. (C. 17 : 3-5).

The law of perfect conduct is natural to men for if the standard were alien to man, it could not be his standard; no code that is unnatural to man could be of any use to him.

Sincerity and true brotherly love are a sure guide to this Law. Note how here the Golden Rule takes the negative form [cf. GJ 13 : 6 and GI 88 and the Jewish form in the Talmud (*Shabbat* 31 a) : "What displeases thee, do not thou to any man; that is the whole of our teaching." Also the earlier in the Apocryphal book of *Tobit* (4 : 15) : "Do to no man that which thou hatest,"] and note also the Sage's personal



modesty which can be compared with that of the Prophet Muhammed (GI 37). No truly great man ever made big claims for himself; no saint ever advertises his saintliness. The four duties here noted are very noble and go very far:—care in the use of words (cf. GI 78 : 4, 82 : 1, and GJ 13 : 3), the carrying out of all obligations (cf. GJ 12 and GI 29 : 1), control of the tongue (GI 73 and 85, and Ep. James 3), and doing what one says (cf. Apocryphon 81, Dhammapada 4 : 8).

He is the wise man who perfectly fulfils in a calm, kindly and balanced way, the duties laid on him by his own place in life. With full trust in the righteous Law that governs the world (the so-called Law of Karma), he is troubled by no failure, and throws no blame on God or man for sufferings that he knows are due to his own actions alone.

The spiritual powers of Nature that administer this perfect Law are infinite and everywhere (cf. GI 4) and in every form we see or feel around us. They are everywhere. It is these forces alone which lead man into action, drawing him from every side. Spirit and form are distinct and yet inseparable. Khung-tsū seems here almost to subscribe to the idea of the Spiritualist that we are always being urged and deterred by spirit beings in the Unseen, but it is more likely that he refers rather to the forces of nature that we have ourselves set in motion.

It is really God who guides men through their natural tendencies expressed in these spiritual forces (cf. GI 12 : 1, 16 : 5), who creates and destroys all things (GI 8); all else are nothing but His instruments. It is He alone who gives man the power to guide or govern other men because of their virtues (GI 13 : 4), and who puts down those who are unworthy (cf. Lk. 1 : 52).



## 15. The Gaining of Virtues

1. It is the virtues (the joint qualities) of a Prince's ministers that make a State well-governed, just as the earth's fertility . . . produces and grows the plants (that cover its surface). A Prince (who would copy the good administration of the ancient Kings) should choose his ministers after his own feelings, ever inspired by the public welfare. So that his feelings may always be prompted by the public good, he should conform himself to (the great law of) duty ; and this . . . should be sought in humanity, that fine virtue of the heart which is the principle of love for all men. (C. 20 : 3-4)

2. This humanity is man himself ; its first duty is friendship for parents. Justice is in doing right ; that is, giving every man his due ; and its first duty is to honour the wise. . . . That is why the Prince cannot dispense with correcting and perfecting himself, . . . giving his parents their due, . . . knowing the wise men so as to honour them in order to be taught his duties by them, . . . and knowing Heaven, the Law that guides



n the practice of the prescribed duties.  
(C. 20 : 5, 7)

3. For the practice of the five universal duties man has three natural faculties : . . . the conscience, which is the light of the mind that discerns good and evil ; humanity, which is the straightness of the heart ; and moral courage, which is soul-force ; . . . but what one needs to practise the five great duties is reduced to only one condition. Whether you are born to know these universal duties, whether you have to study in order to know them, whether it has taken great effort to know them—once that knowledge has been reached, the result is the same. It is all the same whether you practise these universal duties naturally and without effort ; or in the hope of gaining profit or personal advantage from them, or with difficult effort, once the fulfilment has been reached, it comes to the same thing. (C. 20 : 7-8)

4. *The Sage has said* : He who loves study or the turning of his mind to enquire into the law of duty) is very near (that devotion to human happiness which is called) humanity. He who knows how to blush (at his weakness



in doing his duty) is very near the soul-force (needed for accomplishing it).<sup>15</sup> (C. 20 : 10) To some extent, the archer can be compared with the Sage ;<sup>16</sup> if he misses the centre of the target he aims at, he reflects in himself to find out why he has failed. (C. 14 : 5).

5. All those who govern the empire and its kingdoms and clans have to follow nine unchanging rules : self-control or self-improvement, revering the wise, loving parents, honouring the highest officials, being in full harmony with all other officials and magistrates, treating and cherishing the people like sons, drawing all kinds of artisans near to them, giving men who come from afar a kindly welcome, and being friendly with all the great vassals. . . . The means to be used for practising these can all be reduced to a single one. (C. 20 : 12)

6. The true and unspotted is the Law of Heaven ; the perfecting (which consists in doing all one can to discover the heavenly Law) of Heaven's mandate, is the Law of

<sup>15</sup> Legge has this : To be fond of learning is to be near to knowledge. To practise with vigour is to be near to magnanimity. To possess the feeling of shame is to be near to energy.

<sup>16</sup> Or : cultured man. (L.)



Man. The Perfect Man attains this Law without effort; he need not meditate a long time to obtain it; he reaches it calmly and tranquilly: and such a man is the Saint. (C. 20 : 18)

7. He who constantly perfects himself is the Wise Man, who can discern good from evil, chooses the good, and clings to it so firmly as never to lose it. He must study much to learn all that is good; he must question intelligently about it; he must carefully watch all that is good and meditate on it in his soul; he must always carefully distinguish it from all that is evil; he must then firmly and constantly practise this good. (C. 20: 18-19)

8. If there are any who do not study, or who do not profit through study, let them not be discouraged or stop; if there are any who do not ask the learned to enlighten them on things unknown to them, or if they cannot understand through asking them, let them not be discouraged; if there are any who do not meditate, or who do not gain clear knowledge by meditating, let them not be discouraged; if there are any who do not know good from evil, or who even knowing them yet have no



clear perception, let them not be discouraged ; if there are any who do no good, or who cannot employ their whole powers in doing good, let them not be discouraged. What others will do in one time they will do in ten ; what others will do in a hundred they will do in a thousand. He who will truly follow this rule (of persevering), however dull he may be, will surely become enlightened, and however weak he may be, will surely become strong. (C. 20 : 20-21)

The ruler should see that his assistants share his ideals (cf. GI 61-62), which should be the humane performance of his duty. If his ministers have different ideas from his, there can be no harmony.

His four chief duties, in whatever sphere of life he holds his power, are:—self-improvement (cf. GJ 50-51, GI 50), honour to parents (GI 82, Exod. 20 : 12) and the wise (GJ 97 : 3) and the knowledge of Heaven, that is, God (GI 93, GJ 104, and Jn. 8 : 19). Khung-tsū always uses the impersonal word “Heaven” where we should most of us prefer the more usual, the warmer, word “God”. So long as we remember that God is really beyond all our ideas of personality, includes it but goes infinitely beyond it, we shall not err in using this sweeter word with all its associations dear to the mind. There are many passages which show that the idea was present with our sage, though he avoided the word which had not in the China of his day the clear and lofty connotation we ascribe to it, but could more properly be used for spirits, ghosts, and the like.



These five universal obligations are those between ruler and servant, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brothers, and between friends. Interpreted widely, these include all possible human relationships. We are helped in them by our conscience, honesty or sincerity, and moral courage. The way we learn and do our duty, even the motive we have in doing it, is of less concern to Society than the actual doing of it, though the motive matters supremely to the character of the doer.

Devotion to duty really brings us very near to the greatest of virtues ; awareness that we have failed in it brings us near to the moral strength which ensures our success next time.

The nine rules for all rulers sum up as : self-improvement, courtesy to all, and kindness to the ruled. The reader may study the life of the Prophet Muḥammed and see how fully he measures up to this noble Chinese ideal. His frank admission and eternal record in the Holy Qur'ān itself of a mistake he once made in showing impatience when a poor unknown enquirer interrupted his talk with a rich man to whom he was speaking of Islām, stands unique in religious literature, so far as I know, as a proof of his true greatness. I may add that Gandhiji shares this particular virtue of the real Saint (cf. also GI 77, and GJ 13 : 5, 88).

The law of God is perfection, and striving to attain that perfection is the whole Law of Man (cf. GI 98, GJ 74) ; he who naturally finds his happiness in that effort is the lover of God, the Saint.

The Wise Man is he who by study, enquiry, meditation and discernment chooses the good, and then firmly clings to that through all.

Those who find this hard to do need not despair ; it may take them longer than others to attain this wisdom,



but perseverance will certainly take them to it in time. This passage is one of the brightest gems of the whole philosophy; it is mined from the strong rock of universalist optimism whereon the philosophy is built, the source of China's quiet patience.

## 16. The Perfect Man

I consider this Section one of the grandest passages in any of the holy Scriptures man has in his treasury of the ages. Its nobility of motive—perfection for its own sake, with no lesser reward offered as a bribe—and its dignity of language take it to the summit of our religious literature. Parallels to every sentence can be found in almost all the Scriptures, though maybe the reader will be forcibly reminded of the Gītā or parts of the Qur'ān. Much of it is fullest harmony with the teachings of Iamblichus, as given in Merejkowsky's *Mort des Dieux*. Doeblin takes "perfection" as equal to sincerity; the word does mean something like "all-through integrity", "full oneness with the highest known", "absolute truth". He who is always *true* to himself soon becomes able to recognise truth at once; he acquires a "scent" for the untrue, and his "intelligence" becomes keen as a razor.

1. The high light of the mind that is born from (moral perfection or from) absolute sincerity,<sup>17</sup> is called "Natural Virtue" (or primal saintliness); the moral perfection that is born from the high light of the mind, is

<sup>17</sup> This word "sincerity has been variously defined by the Chinese commentators, as *freedom from all deception, ceaselessness, freedom from all moral error*, and by Chū-Hsi himself as *truth and reality*. It seems actually to connote simplicity, singleness of soul, one-pointedness, and general moral perfection.



called "Education" (or acquired saintliness). Moral perfection posits the high light of the mind, and the high light of the mind posits moral perfection. (C. 21)

2. In the world it is only men supremely perfect who can fully know and develop their own nature, (the law of their being and the duties arising therefrom). (So) they can know and develop fully the nature of other men, (the law of their being, and teach them all the duties they should perform in order to fulfil Heaven's mandate.) (Then) they can thereby know and develop fully the nature of other beings, animals and plants, (and help them to fulfil their law of life according to their own nature). They can thereby, through their superior mental powers, help Heaven and Earth in changing and maintaining beings so that they may develop fully. Being able to **do this**, they can thus become a third power along with Heaven and Earth. (C. 22)

3. Those who come just after these (men supremely perfect in their own nature), are those who do all they can to rectify their tendencies away from the good ; **then** they are perfectly sincere, . . . produce visible outer



effects, . . . are manifested, . . . emit great splendour, move (the hearts of) others, cause many to repent, efface even the last traces of vice. There are in the world none save men supremely perfect who can thus efface the last traces of vice (in the heart of man). (C. 23)

4. The powers of men supremely perfect are so great that they can by their means foresee things to come . . . When sad or happy events are near, the supremely perfect man foresees with certainty if they will be good ; he foresees with equal certainty if they will be evil. That is how the supremely perfect man is like the spirits. (C. 24)

5. The "Perfect" (or : Real) is of Himself perfect, absolute; the law of duty is of itself the way he goes. The "Perfect" is the beginning and end of all beings ; without the "Perfect" beings would not be. Therefore the Sage values this perfection above all. The Perfect Man does not merely confine himself to self-perfecting ; with this quality (of absolute sincerity) he devotes himself to perfecting other beings also. Self-perfecting is, no doubt, a virtue ; the perfecting of others is a lofty science ; (these two are) virtues of Nature (or



the pure rational faculty). To unite the outer and the inner perfectings makes up the law of duty, and it is in this way one acts properly according to the circumstances. (C. 25)

6. This is why the supremely perfect man<sup>18</sup> never ceases (to do good or to work for perfecting others); . . . always perseveres in doing good; . . . then all bear witness of him; . . . his influence increases and spreads afar; . . . it grows vast and deep; . . . then it is high and radiant. The virtue of the supremely perfect man is vast and deep, so he can add to the support and evolution of others; it is high and radiant, so he can illumine with his light; it is great and steady, so he can help Heaven and Earth to become perfect and identify himself in his deeds with them.<sup>19</sup> In their greatness and depth of virtue supremely perfect men are like Earth; in its height and splendour they are like Heaven; in its wideness and duration they are (like) infinite (Space and Time). He (who is in this lofty state of perfect saintliness) does not display himself,

<sup>18</sup> Or : sincerity. (L.)

<sup>19</sup> Or : Large and substantial ;—this is how it contains all things. High and brilliant ;—this is how it overspreads all things. Reaching far and continuing long ;—this is how it perfects all things, (L.)



and yet (like the Earth he) is revealed by his deeds ; he does not at all disturb himself, and yet he brings about countless changes (like Heaven) ; he does not act at all, and yet (like Space and Time) he attains to the perfection of his works. (C. 26 : 1—6)

7. The way of Heaven and Earth can be fully expressed by a single word ; that is “singleness”. But its way of producing beings cannot be understood. The way of Heaven and Earth is indeed vast ; it is deep ! it is sublime ! it is splendid ! it is immense ! it is eternal ! (C. 26 : 7-8)

8. If for a moment we turn our gaze on Heaven, we at first see only a little space sparkling with lights, but if we could rise to that shining space we should find it of infinite immensity ; in it the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, are hung as by a thread ; by it all beings in the world are covered as with a canopy. Now if we throw a glance at the Earth, we shall at first think we could hold it in the hand ; but if we travel over it we shall find it wide and deep, bearing the high flowery mountain under its weight without trembling, enclosing in its bosom the rivers and seas



without being flooded by them,<sup>20</sup> and carrying all beings. This mountain seems to us only a small piece of rock; but if we explore it closely we shall find it vast and high; plants and trees grow upon it, birds and animals make their dwelling there, and it hides undiscovered treasures in its breast. And that water we see from afar seems to us barely enough to fill a tiny cup; but if we travel on its surface we shall be unable to sound its depth; huge tortoises, crocodiles, iguanodons, dragons and fish of every kind live in it; precious riches are found therein!... (C. 26 : 9)

9. Oh, how grand is the Saint's law of duty! It is a shoreless ocean. It creates and supports all beings, it reaches up to the height of Heaven. (C. 27 : 2) It is this ceaseless action which makes it Heaven's mandate. (C. 26 : 10) Oh, how abundant and vast it is! It embraces three hundred rules of ceremony and three thousand of politeness. The man who can follow such a law must be awaited, so that it may be practised. That is why it is said, "Unless one has the supreme virtue of

<sup>20</sup> Or : their leaking away. (L.)



the Saints, the supreme law of duty be practised." (C. 27 : 3-5)

10. That is also why the wise man (fitted with the law of duty) honours his nature, (this Right Reason which received from Heaven,) and he does enquiry and attentive study of what is laid down for him. To this end he penetrates to the utmost limits of its depth and width, he grasps its precepts which are too subtle for common minds to reach. He develops the latent and pure faculties of his mind to the utmost degree, and he makes it his rule always to follow the dictates of the Right Reason. He conforms himself to the laws of man's nature already recognised and practised from olden days, and he tries to find out what is not yet defined. He earnestly clings to what is honest and just, so as to give effect to the practice of rites which express the Law. (C. 27 : 6)

11. So if he is clothed with honour he is not proud, if he finds himself in some lower position he never feels regret. If the government of the State is right

<sup>21</sup> Or : the Poise.      〃



his word will be enough to raise him (to the honour he deserves) ; on the other hand, if the State is ill-governed his silence will be enough to save his person. (C. 27 : 7)

The inner light of Intelligence and Moral Perfection are mutually dependent. Truth and Wisdom, Sincerity and Intuitional grasp of Reality, go together. The light derived from virtue, being innate, is called original saintliness ; the virtue gained step by step through the practice of the inner light is called acquired saintliness.

Only the Perfect Man can fully know himself, and others. This deep knowledge of himself gives him the power to help and guide others in fulfilling God's law for each of them as laid down in his own nature. It is in this way the Perfect Man co-operates with God in His Plan. (cf. § 18 : 2).

The next highest grade of men always strive to purify themselves, and so they gradually win glory along with the power of helping others ; at last they too become truly perfect.

The Perfect Man attains, with or without his desire, other powers (*siddhis*), such as a full knowledge of the future.

Perfection (*Pūrṇatvam*) is the Source and Goal of all (or, as the Qur'ān puts it : "We came from Him, to Him shall we return !"). To aid all in seeking that is the constant aim of the one who has himself achieved it. To seek perfection (that is God) oneself and to help others in the seeking of it, is man's highest, his noblest duty.



Thus the Perfect Man is always active in doing good, and even when he is silent he is always spreading his ennobling influence on every side. His own perfection gives him the splendid power to help others, and so to share in God's work. Though the Saint does not speak of himself or draw attention to himself in any way, his very life declares him to the world; though he is ever calm, dispassionate, and seemingly inactive, he works mighty changes in the world, for it is not he who acts but God through him.

There is but one Law in Heaven and Earth; and that is Perfection or Oneness, the *Purṇa* of Sanskrit literature. The imperfect man cannot understand why there should be creation at all in a Perfection already full and perfect, for creation has sprung from the Infinite Mind.

The more we study Nature, the more we delve into her secrets, the vaster, grander, lovelier, we see she is. (cf. GH 21 : 5) Legge destroys the beauty, while perhaps preserving the dry bones, of this sublime passage.

It is the same with the moral law of Perfection; it is infinite in its complexity and infinite in its grand simplicity. Only the Perfect Man can fully practise it.

So the wise man is always busy trying to draw a little nearer to this sublime goal of Perfection ahead of him. He dives deep into his own soul, trains his mind to obey the conscience, carries out the laws he knows and ever seeks to know fresh laws, clinging unweariedly to all that is of good report.

Therefore he never takes pride in honours that come to him or feels shame in failure or humiliation; alike in joy and pain, he finds a sure support in his own character, which he has based firmly on the universal Law.



## 17. The Ideal Prince

1. In establishing the main laws, a wise Prince's standard has its fundamental basis in himself.<sup>22</sup> Then the authority of his virtue and high dignity will impose itself on all the people. When he conforms his administration with that of the founders of the first three dynasties, he will not go astray. When he fixes his laws in line with those of Heaven and Earth, they will not be opposed to them. If he seeks in spirits the proof of Truth he will be free from all doubts. It takes a hundred generations to wait for the Saint,<sup>23</sup> and he is not subject to our errors<sup>24</sup>. . . That is why the Prince has but to act, and for ages his acts are the law of the Empire; he has but to speak, and for ages his words are the standard of the Empire. The distant people put their hopes in him, while those who are near will never be weary of him. (C. 29 : 3, 5)

<sup>22</sup> *Or* : is rooted in himself.

<sup>23</sup> *Commentator* : so he knows deeply the law of the heavenly mandate.

<sup>24</sup> *Commentator* : so he knows deeply the principles of human nature. *or* : He is ready to wait for a hundred ages for a Saint to come,



2. The Sage Chung-nī (Khung-Tsü) recall with reverence the teachings of (the former Emperors) Yāo and Shun; but he mainly ruled himself by the conduct of (the more recent Sovereigns) Wen and Wū. (Taking as his model for action the natural and changeless laws that rule the heavenly bodies) above our heads, he imitated the regular sequence of the seasons, Heaven, he conformed himself with (the laws of the) Earth or Water (fixed or movable) at our feet. He can be compared with Heaven and Earth that contain and nourish all; . . . he can be compared with the four seasons which follow continually without break; he can be compared with the sun and the moon that light the world in turn. (C. 30 : 1-2)

3. All the beings of Nature live one life together and do not conflict with each other; all the laws that rule the seasons and the heavenly bodies are carried out at the same time without conflict among them. One of nature's minor tasks is to make a stream flow; but its great energies (its grand and supreme powers) create and transform all beings! There indeed is what makes Heaven and Earth supreme! (C. 30 : 3)



4. None in the universe but the supremely pure man, by means of fully knowing and perfectly understanding the primal laws of living beings, can be worthy to have supreme authority and to command men. Because he has a soul, great, noble, pleasant and sweet, he alone can have the power lavishly to distribute blessings; he alone, because his soul is lofty, firm, unshakable and steady, can make justice and equity reign; he alone by being always honest, simple, serious, straight and just, can draw respect and reverence; he only, being clothed with spiritual adornments and talents that ensure deep study, and with those lights that let him enquire precisely into the most hidden things and the subtlest principles, can discern exactly the true from the false, the good from the bad. (C. 31 : 1)

5. His faculties are so all-embracing, so vast, so deep, that they are like an immense fountain whence all comes forth in its turn. They are as vast and wide as Heaven, while the hidden source from which they flow is as deep as the abyss.<sup>25</sup> Let this supremely

<sup>25</sup> One Chinese commentator says on this passage: "Heaven and man are not really two, and man is separated from Heaven only by having this body. Of their seeing and hearing, their



pure man appear, and the people show him their reverence ; let him speak, and the people trust his words ; let him act, and the people certainly will be in joy. That is how the renown of his virtues floods the Empire on every side. . . . All human beings who live and breathe will be compelled to love and honour him. (C. 31 : 2-4)

6. In the universe none but the man of immaculate purity of soul can make out and fix the duties of the five great relationships . . . , establish on settled principles in conformity with the nature of beings the great fundamental basis of action and of the works that are carried on in the world, or know perfectly the creations and destructions of Heaven and Earth. Such a supremely perfect man has the principle of his actions in himself. His kindness towards all men is extremely vast, his inner faculties are extremely deep, his

thinking and meditating, their moving and acting, men all say, 'It is from ME.' Thus everyone brings out his own self, and his smallness becomes known. But let the body be taken away, and all would be Heaven. How can the body be taken away? Simply by subduing and removing that self-having of the ego. . . . That being done, so wide and great as Heaven is, so also is my mind wide and great, and creation and transformation cannot be separate from me." A clear account of the basic truth of the mystic life, that self-abnegation which raises us beside the angels.



knowledge of heavenly things is extremely wide.<sup>26</sup> (C. 32 : 1-2)

7. Who can know his merit unless himself truly very enlightened, deeply intelligent, holy in virtues, instructed in the divine laws, and permeated by the four great heavenly virtues ? (C. 32 : 3)

The wise and saintly Ruler who bases his laws on this essential Law of Heaven can never be opposed, and his words and acts are for ages the model of his people, winning their love and faith (cf. *Gr̥ā*, 3 : 21).

The Sage Khung-Tsū himself took as his model the best of Emperors who were guided by this eternal Law of Righteousness ; thus all he did was eternal and divinely right.

The whole of Nature is one perfect harmony ; the same power that builds up worlds bubbles out in a tiny fountain. All works in perfect co-operation ; there is no opposition to the universal laws anywhere in Nature (cf. *GI* 6 : 2, 9 : 2, etc.).

Only a Perfect Man, with all the noblest qualities of soul, can be fit to rule others or able to bless them, establish righteousness, win reverence, and correctly discriminate between true and false. So also said Lincoln in effect, and so also said Sri Rāmakrishna. Democracy will become a reality in this tortured world when this is realised in all its fullest implications !

<sup>26</sup> For this sentence, Legge has : Call him man in his ideal, how earnest is he ! Call him an abyss, how deep is he ! Call him Heaven, how vast is he !



His perfection is akin to that Perfection whence all comes forth. So he cannot but win the love and trust and joy of everyone by all that he may say or do.

It is only he, again, who can make laws truly in harmony with the essential laws of God and Nature, for those essential laws reign inherent in his own nature and consciousness; so his love, power and wisdom are boundless as Nature's own. He is the true Philanthropist, "lover of men."

But it is only the Perfect Man himself who can truly recognise his fellow who has also gained perfection in the four great virtues humanity, justice, goodness and the knowledge of duty. None but the Saint can know the Saint.

## 18. The Man of Wisdom

1. The virtuous deeds of the Sage withdraw from notice and yet are daily more and more revealed, whereas the virtuous deeds of the mean man are brought out with display but daily vanish away. The conduct of the Sage is flavourless like water, and yet it is not irksome; it is withdrawn, and yet it is recognised; it seems confused and yet it follows law. The Sage knows distant things by the things near to himself; he knows the feelings of others by his own, the movements of his own heart; and he knows the most secret movements of his own heart by those that are



revealed in others.<sup>27</sup> Thus he can enter the path of virtue. When he looks into himself, the Sage finds nothing in his heart to reproach himself with or to blush at. What the Sage cannot find in himself, is it not the same as others do not perceive in themselves? (C. 33 : 3-5)

2. Even when he does not appear in public, the Sage still draws respect to himself; he is still true and sincere even when he remains silent . . . Without making gifts the Sage wins men to the practice of virtue; he never gives way to anger, and yet he is dreaded by the people like a hatchet or a battle-axe . . . A man full of virtues clings to sincerity and reverence and so all the world rejoices in tranquil happiness. (C. 33 : 3-5)

3. *The Sage said*: Outer show and noise have little value in converting peoples. . . "The actions, the secret operations, of the supreme

<sup>27</sup> "Those who carefully watch over themselves to observe and control all the movements of their heart are well disposed to gain the knowledge of the secret of hearts, whether because God is pleased to reward with this favour the study which they make within them, or because the experience of what they feel in themselves teaches them to judge well what passes in others." This passage from a French life of Fr. Lallemand in his *Spiritual Doctrine* (p. 37) (Paris, 1930) is closely parallel to our Chinese text.



Heaven have neither sound nor smell." That is supreme perfection. (C. 33 : 6)

The great man rather avoids publicity, and yet he is ever more clearly shown up by his very virtues while the foolish man who is always seeking advertisement only loses his good name thereby. The Sage is not always understood, and yet his words and deeds are wholly perfect and free from blame; his study of himself constantly reacts upon his study of the outer world, and both are in constant harmony with the universal Law (cf. *Light on the Path*, 1 : 14-15 : Seek the Way by retreating within, . . . by advancing boldly without.)

Though withdrawn, silent, inactive, calm, the Sage always enjoys respect, trust, influence and righteous fear in the heart of the people. Because they know of his absolute sincerity and justice, they all fear to wrong him by falsehood or by tyranny. Thus righteousness prevails on every hand, and spreads over the world through the character of one man.

Much talk and fine outer show have little real power over others. God acts silently, but with supremely decisive effect. So too the influence of the wise man, though silent and unseen, pours out from him on all sides as a constant force to guide the people into truth.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# PHILOSOPHIC DISCOURSE

MOST of this Chapter is drawn from the book LUN-YU, which gave us also the material for Chapter I. It consists in the main of fragments of conversation between the Sage and his disciples and others, lit up by many quotations from *The Book of Verses* and other books then held to be sacred. These talks throw much light on the details of the Philosophy already stated in Chapters II and III. The whole is in the Sage's own words, save where indicated by the use of italics.

Much stress is laid on the supreme virtue of "humanity", which may perhaps be rendered in Sanskrit by *saddṛshya* plus *samatā* (the quality of looking on and treating all as equal, a sort of beneficent and sympathetic impartiality; can we use the word "Fraternity"? If so, we must remember also that there are elder and younger brothers, and the Chinese word includes that idea.) Perhaps "Gentlemanliness" comes near to the force of the word better, for it has wide implications of innate courtesy and consideration. It is the real key-note of the whole teaching of China's greatest Sages; one which could have been conceived of as the ideal only in an old and highly-developed culture.

Several passages in this Chapter also give us valuable sidelights on the personal life of Khung-fu-Tsü himself, and of his disciples.



## 19. The Sage on Himself

1. At the age of fifteen my mind was constantly busy in study; at thirty I was established in solid and fixed principles; at forty I felt no more doubts or uncertainty; at fifty I knew the Law of Heaven; at sixty I easily grasped the causes of events; and at seventy I satisfied my heart's desires without ever exceeding limits. (L : 2 : 4) I was not at all born gifted with knowledge; I was a man with love for the ancients, and I have done all I could to gain their knowledge. (L. 7 : 19) .

2. *Once Tsü-kung<sup>1</sup> asked Khung-Tsü, saying to him "Master, are you a Saint?" Khung-Tsü replied to him: A Saint? I am very far from the ability to be that! I study (the precepts of holy men) without satiety, and I teach without ever getting weary. (M : 3 : 2) In literature, I may be equal to other men; but even if I wish my actions to be truly cultured I have not yet become perfect. If I think of a man who adds saintliness to the virtue of humanity, then how dare I even compare myself with*

<sup>1</sup> Tsü-kung was born in B.C. 520. He was clever and eloquent and became the commandant of Hsin-yung. He was nursing the Sage on his deathbed.



such ? All I know is that I unweariedly try to practise these virtues and to teach them to others without getting discouraged. That is all I can say of myself. (L. 7 : 32-33)

3. I have passed whole days without food and whole nights without sleep, to devote myself to meditation ; that was useless and study is much to be preferred. (L. 15 : 30) Even in a hamlet of ten houses there must be men as straight and sincere as Khieu, but there is not one who loves study like him. (L. 5 : 27) Am I really in possession of knowledge ? I know nothing of that. But when I meet an ignorant man who puts me questions, however empty they may be, I answer them as best I can, exhausting the subject in all its aspects. (L. 9 : 7) The very moment any person has come to see me and has offered me the customary gifts, I have never failed to teach him. (L. 7 : 7) If a person has purified his heart to come to see me, I receive him as pure, without questioning his past. (L. 7 : 28) You, my disciples, as many of you as there are, do you believe that I have secret doctrines for you ? I have no secret doctrines for you ! I have done



nothing of which I would not tell you, O my disciples ! That is how Khieu acts. (L. 7 : 28)

4. Unless a man tries to develop his own soul, I will not develop it myself ; unless a man cares to use his own power of speech, I will not enter the meaning of his words ;<sup>2</sup> if after I have made known one angle of a square the size of the other three angles is not known, then I will not repeat the lesson. (L. 7 : 8) To meditate in silence and to remember the subject of the meditation, to give oneself steadily to study, to teach men without humiliating<sup>3</sup> them,—how shall I attain the possession of these virtues ? (L. 7 : 2)

5. If three of us walk together, I shall certainly find two teachers ; I shall choose the good man to copy and the bad man to correct myself by. (L. 7 : 21) How happy is Khieu ! if he make a mistake, people are sure to know to know of it ! (L. 7 : 30) I make no complaint against Heaven nor do I blame men, for though my studies are lowly, yet my mind soars aloft ; does not Heaven know me ? (L. 14 : 37)

<sup>2</sup> Or : help him out.

<sup>3</sup> Or : tiring.



Khung-fu-Tsū tells us how slowly he reached the heights of wisdom during a long life of tireless effort, ascribing his success to his love for truth and his eager sincerity in seeking it.

He disclaims the title of saint and admits only his steady love of virtue and ceaseless efforts at living a good and helpful life in the way laid down by the Saints of the past. This humility is one of the greatest attractions in the real Saint, wherever we find him.

He again asserts his intense love of study, which is better than (mere) meditation, but he does not know if he has really attained to knowledge in any true sense. That is possible only to the Perfect Man (cf. § 16 : 2). As someone else has said, "He who knows he does not know is the only real knower." One thing Khieu (his family pet-name) does do; he always and at once does his best to help others by answering their questions; he keeps nothing back from any, but gives frankly and with a whole heart the very best he has to offer to everyone, whatever he may have been.

He will not thrust himself on others, nor will he do their thinking for them (cf. GI 66); he is ready to help, but they must themselves make the effort to understand and so to profit by his words. His ideal as a teacher is very beautiful:—to think quietly, to study patiently, and then to teach in all kindly humility. No arrogant assumption of superiority in the teacher over the taught. Has the most modern educational ideal really gone beyond this? Only too often in India at least our practice is: to omit altogether the prior thinking, to replace the study with cards, gossip or tennis, and the gentle teaching with indifferent and arrogant lecturing!

He himself, like all true teachers, is always ready to learn from any others whom he meets (cf. the twenty-four Gurus of Avadhūta in the *Srimad*



*Bhagavatam* XI). His prominence in Society helps him in this, for all are likely to blame and correct him if ever he goes wrong! This little touch of humour is delightfully human, a refreshing quality only too rarely found in the World's great Scriptures. It endears us to the "Prophet of China" more than to many other of Heaven's Prophets to man. And it is his sweet humility endears him to God, though men may esteem him ordinary.

## 20. The Need for Philosophy

1. "One considers good as if it could not be attained and vice as if one touched boiling water;" I have seen men act in this way and I have heard men use this language. "One withdraws into the privacy of solitude to seek the principles of Reason in his thought; one cultivates justice in order to put these same principles of Reason into practice;" I have heard such language used, but I have never yet seen a man act in this way. (L. 16 : 11) I have not yet seen anyone who loved virtue as much as the beauty of the body is loved. (L. 9 : 17) I was never able to see a Saint; all I could see was a Wise Man. I could never manage to see a truly good man; all I could do was to see a man of constant ideas. To lack everything and yet act as if one had



plenty, to be empty and yet appear full, to be small and yet appear great—is a rôle hard to keep up continually. (L. 7 : 25)

2. Virtue is not cultivated; study is not sought after with care. Even when one recognises justice and equity one does not wish to follow them; there is no desire to correct imperfections. This is what makes me sad! (L. 7 : 3) Flowery words, affected manners, and exaggerated politeness, that is what . . . I blush at. Hiding resentment in the breast while making a show of friendship, that is what makes me blush. (L. 5 : 24) Filling the highest rank without doing good to those whom one governs, and practising the prescribed rites and customs without reverence, and the funeral ceremonies without real sorrow,—that is what I cannot bear to see. (L. 3 : 26) A man devoid of sincerity and faithfulness is incomprehensible in my eyes. He is a big chariot without a shaft, a little carriage without a pole; how can he guide himself in the way of life? <sup>4</sup> (L. 2 : 22) <sup>4</sup>

Some despair of being good and yet hate evil; others say that they seek wisdom in the heart and put

<sup>4</sup> Or: How can a waggon without its yoke-bar for the ox, or a carriage without its collar-bar for the horses, be made to move? (S)



it into practice, giving it all lip-service, but very very few, if any, really do this or prefer virtue to worldly things. Khung-Tsū tells us he has never yet seen a Saint, but only some men who were wisely persevering in efforts towards perfection or holiness. It is very hard for us to pretend to greater spirituality than we really have; the keen observer will easily strip away our most elaborate pretence. And it is known to our own conscience, too!

There is little genuine wish for wisdom in the world, only a wealth of fine words. What is sadder than a show of kindness that is a mere mask for anger and dislike? It is hateful to see insincerity, or a man who fails to use his powers in helping others; such a man is without support in his life like (to use modern similes) an aeroplane without oil, or a room without doors. His life is vain indeed and ridiculous in its emptiness.

## 21. What is Knowledge?

1. . My teaching is simple and easy to penetrate; that is certain. . . . (It) consists solely in having a straight heart and in loving one's neighbour like oneself.<sup>5</sup> (L. 4 : 15)

2. Do you know what knowledge is? To know that one knows what one does know, and to know that one does not know what one does not know. That is true knowledge. (L. 2 : 17) To employ all one's power in doing

<sup>5</sup> Or : consideration for others.



what is just and useful to men, to revere the spirits of the dead and to keep them always at the proper distance, can be called wisdom (L. 6 : 20) *Tsu-Chang asked what "insight" was. The Sage said* : Not to hear the slanders that slip in quietly like smooth-flowing water, or charges whose framers are ready to cut off a piece of their own flesh (to affirm them)—that can be called "insight". To pay no heed to (such) slanders . . . can be called far-sighted. (L. 12 : 6)

3. By nature men come very close to one another; by education they become more separate. It is only the men of higher knowledge and intelligence who do not change at all while living with men of the lowest ignorance.<sup>6</sup> (L. 17 : 2-3)

4. In old days, men gave themselves to study for self improvement; men of today study for the praise of others. (L. 14 : 25) It is not easy to find one man who gives himself for three years to constant study without having in mind the return it may bring. He who has an unshakable faith in truth and who

<sup>6</sup> Or : It is only the very wisest and the very stupidest who never change. (S.)



passionately loves study, keeps till death the virtuous principles which result from that. (L. 8 : 12-13) He who daily gains knowledge that he lacks, and who monthly does not forget what he has been able to learn, can be said to love study. (L. 19 : 15) Those who do nothing but drink and eat the whole day, without employing their minds on any worthy subject, are indeed to be pitied. (L. 17 : 22)

"My whole teaching is the sincere love of others, which is very easy to understand." Here, five centuries before Jesus, we have his main doctrine in a few perfect words (cf. GJ 14, 42 : 2). It is, indeed, the substance of the whole of the man-ward side of religion, in every age. Even Communism, one of the greatest religions of our day (with its God in the perfect man to be, its prophets in Marx and Lenin and Stalin, its practice in the freeing, teaching and serving of mankind), is summed up in this sublime ideal. In this the oldest and the newest creeds are one; it is the common element in all the God-given cults of all the world, that is, the highest aspiration of man's purified mind.

An interesting definition of true knowledge, with which our chastened Western scientists (freed as they now are from the ignorant bias towards materialism) will be in full agreement,<sup>7</sup> is here followed by another, which will appeal more readily perhaps to what is often (I think, unjustly) called the Eastern mind. That spirits are to be treated with respect *and* kept at a

<sup>7</sup> cf. the Buddha in *Dhammapada* (5 : 4) : A fool who knows that he is ignorant is to that extent a wise man ; but a fool who thinks of himself that he is wise is indeed a fool.



decent distance, in their place, is an unusual but very sane teaching. Like the Buddha, Khung-Tsū never said a word likely to increase the human tendency to superstition; this accounts for his reticence on God and the supernatural (if such a thing can exist in a world where Nature is all but infinite!). Mental keenness is nicely defined as indifference to all evil-speaking, no matter how soft or subtle it be, or how zealously affirmed as true.

We are naturally kindred, having all come from One Source; in the depths of every heart there is a perfect oneness, to be found by him who dives within, in the Silence. It is only our training, our outer customs, our education, our perversion (I had almost said!), which increases and stresses our differences. How true this is of our religions! To the sympathetic eye of the cultured student, they are very near each other, and all clearly come from a common source of inspiration. But our sectarian commentators stress the little variations that give them charm and appeal to the varying ages and peoples to whom they were first given. Then at last they seem to contradict each other, and rouse hostility instead of the friendship and brotherhood their Founders had as their aim. How silly all this is! What should unite us in loving friendship becomes the greatest barrier to our mutual comradeship, and at last religion itself has to be viewed with dislike and suspicion by the greatest lovers of mankind. What a tragedy!

This paragraph also warns us of the effect of our human contacts; if our friends are mean and foolish, their bad qualities will in time also contaminate our own minds and drag us down (cf. GI 54 : 1, 61-62, also Jer. 51 : 6 and Rev. 18 : 4, 2 Cor. 6 : 14-18). "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" only the greatest souls can resist the downward pull. Here we have clearly laid down the principle of "*sat-sang*" (cf. GI 69 and GJ 97 : 3), which is to be found taught in almost all Scriptures.



Nowadays study is usually undertaken only to impress others with our cleverness and the depth of our learning, and there are few who sincerely cling to it so as to benefit themselves. It is when the world is in so corrupt a state that great Teachers have to come to it to restore all things (*Gitā* 4 : 7-8, Mt. 24 : 9-13, 29-30 GH 35 : 1). Those alone gain the highest blessings from study who woo it for its own sake and incessantly try to follow it day by day, striving to learn and to remember more and more.

## 22. The Path to Knowledge

1. Study always as if you could never attain and as if you feared to lose the fruit of your studies! (L. 8 : 17) If you study without concentrating your thought, you will lose all the fruit of your study; if on the other hand you abandon yourself to your thoughts without turning them towards study, you will expose yourself to grave inconveniences. (L. 2 : 15)

2. One can apply himself to study with all his might without being able to meet the true principles of Reason. One can find the true principles of Reason without being able to establish himself firmly in them.<sup>8</sup> One can

<sup>8</sup> S. has this: Learning without thinking is useless; thinking without learning is dangerous.



establish himself firmly in them without being able to ascertain their value relative to times and circumstances. (L. 9 : 29)

3. Let the mind always be fixed on the principles of the Straight Path ; let one hold fast to it in his moral character ; let one turn ceaselessly towards the virtue of humanity ; let one apply his leisure moments to cultivation of the arts. (L. 7 : 6) I must hear the advice of many persons, choose what they have of good, and follow that. I see much and reflect calmly over what I have seen,—that is the next best thing to knowledge. How can men get on who act without knowing what they do ? I should not like to act in that way. (L. 7 : 27)

4. Make yourself the complete master of what you have learned, and always learn something new ; then you can become a teacher of men. (L. 2 : 11) If the innate tastes of a man dominate his education, then he is only a rustic. If on the contrary education dominates the man's innate tastes, then he is only a scribbler. But when education and the innate tastes are equally balanced they form the cultured man. (L. 6 : 16) If



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politeness and respect for others are not controlled by education, then they are only irksome effort. If caution and kindness are not controlled by education, they are nothing but excessive timidity. Unless manly courage be controlled by education, it is only recklessness; if frankness be not controlled by education, then it drags you into effrontery, (L. 8 : 2)

5. The student whose thought inclines to wisdom but who is ashamed of shabby clothes and poor food, is not yet fit to hear the holy word of justice. (L. 4 : 9)

6. If you do not speak to a man when you should, you will lose him. If you give your ethics to a man who is unwilling to receive them, you will lose your words. The wise and enlightened man does not lose men; equally he does not lose his teachings. (L. 15 : 7)

Loose thinking and mere day-dreaming are dangerous; the love of deep and honest study must become an all-absorbing passion of the mind.

There are four stages on the path to knowledge : (a) earnest study (b) insight into the truth, (c) assimilation and practice, and (d) full understanding.

Be fixed in truth, delighting in kindliness, and enjoying the six arts whenever you have time. These



six arts are so listed by the commentators:—ritual, music, archery, riding, writing (which includes painting) and arithmetic. They train the student in courtesy, harmony, skilled action, patience, self-expression and accuracy. Select the best points in the advice given by many people (cf. GI 98:3, GJ 40). You can learn a great deal if you see much and then calmly think over what you have seen, but you should always keep your aim clear before you, or you may be lost in unimportant details.

By thorough and incessant learning alone can you become fit to teach others. Culture lies in a perfect balance between innate and acquired education; the excess of either produces a boor or a prig. The innate qualities must be brought under control and guided, but not swamped, by education if the soul is to have a perfect expression in life.

The worthy student loves knowledge, and does not worry about his dress or food (cf. GJ 69). The very word "student" indeed derives from a Latin word meaning "be eager"; those who merely study when compelled are in no real sense students at all. This eagerness over study will save much anxiety about whether the dress is fashionable or ragged, whether the food is dainty, of the right temperature, or gives the right caloric value.

It is waste of time to teach the unworthy or the unwilling pupil; at the same time it is a failure of duty to miss a chance of teaching the worthy (cf. GI 31:2, 35:3 and Mt. 7:6, 10:13-14, 28:19). The knowledge of him who knows but does not teach to others becomes a curse in his heart, as Manu laid down in ancient India; and another has said, "Inaction is a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin." And giving others the truth we know, if they are ready and willing to receive it, is the highest service man can do to man.



### 23. On Judging Others

1. When a crowd of people find themselves together for a whole day, not all their words are fair and just ; they like to occupy themselves only with vulgar and tricky matters. How hard it is for them to do good ! (L. 15 : 16) Artificial words would corrupt even virtue ; fickle impatience ruins the greatest plans. Let the mob loathe anyone, still you should examine carefully before judging him ; let the mob adore anyone, still you should examine carefully before judging him. Man can promote the way of virtue, but the way of virtue cannot promote the man. He can be called vicious who has vicious conduct and does not correct himself. (L. 15 : 26-29) Vicious men disguise their faults under a veneer of honesty. (L. 19 : 8)

2. Glory . . . consists in having innate straightness and in cherishing justice, in carefully examining men's words, in considering their faces, and in submitting the will to that of other men . . . Renown . . . sometimes consists only in taking on an appearance of the



virtue of humanity while one is far from it in one's actions. (L. 12 : 20)

3. Those who outwardly show a grave and austere air while inwardly they are light and cowardly, are like the most wretched of men; they are like thieves who try to pierce a wall in order to steal (L. 17 : 12) What is the good of being able to talk with skill? Wordy discussions with men often draw to us their hatred. I do not know if **So-and-So** has the humane virtue; why should I find out if he talks well? (L. 5 : 4) He who has virtues should be able to express himself easily: it does not follow that he who can express himself easily has those virtues. (L. 14 : 5) If the expressions used are frank and intelligible, that is enough. (L. 15 : 40)

4. Carefully watch a man's actions, see what his motives are, carefully examine what gives him pleasure; then how can he escape, how can he impose on you? (L. 2 : 10) When you see a wise man, ask yourself if you have the same qualities as he; when you see a perverse man, look again into yourself and carefully examine your own conduct. (L. 4 : 17)



A crowd is generally busy with gossip or mischief. Do not take the opinion of the crowd on anyone, but make up your own mind after careful thought, (cf. GI 73, Jn. 7:24). Even the worst of men usually disguise themselves with a show of goodness (cf. GJ 84-85, 97:1)

This is the difference between fame, which may be undeserved, and glory. The latter is the fruit of sincerity, impartiality, caution, observation, and altruism—fine qualities for a judge who has them, even if he must sit in one of our courts of law! (cf. GI 80, 86)

Insincere men are trying to steal fame; hypocrisy is theft, and is rightly deemed one of the meanest of vices. Thus it was mercilessly trounced by Jesus and Muḥammed equally (cf. GJ 117-118, GI 95:3). Skill in argument or in lecturing on philosophy does not show character or virtue; it may only stir up anger and hatred when the talker does not act upon his principles. A straight thinker speaks frankly and easily, but a fluent talker is not always honest or sincere. Watch the politicians, and see what they do after election; compare that with election speeches!

You can understand a man's real nature by watching what he does and how he amuses himself. One-said, "Show me a man's books, and I will tell you what he is." When you see others, do not judge them before you look carefully into yourself and see if you have those good or bad qualities you seem to see in them. (cf. GJ 51, 100) "Examine yourself by your Self," says the Buddha (*Dhammapada*, 25:20), and compare also *Dh.* 18:18.

## 24. The Humane Virtue

1. However great it be, one should never think of the distance that separates us (from



virtue). (L. 9 : 30) Is humanity so far from us? I long for humanity, and humanity comes to me. (L. 7 : 29) The man who is firm and patient, simple and natural, sober in words, comes very near to the humane virtue. (L. 13 : 27) Humanity is what is hard at first to practise but what one can at last by many efforts acquire.<sup>9</sup> (L. 6 : 20) Make it a duty to practise the humane virtue, and do not give it up even on the order of your preceptors. (L. 15 : 35) The virtue of humanity is more to men than water and fire. I have seen men die for having walked into water and fire ; I have never seen them die for walking on the path of humanity. (L. 15 : 34)

2. *Chung-Kung asked what the humane virtue was. The Sage said*: When you have come out of your house, behave as if you had to see a very distinguished guest ; in directing the people, behave (with the same respect) as if you were offering the Great Sacrifice. Do not do to others what you would not like to be done to yourself. Then none . . . will have any resentment against you. (L. 12 : 2)

<sup>9</sup> Or: as S. has it: The man of virtue puts duty first, however difficult, and makes what he will gain thereby an after-consideration—and this may be called virtue.



3. *Yen-Yuen asked what the virtue of humanity was. The Sage said:* To have absolute self-control, to return to the rites or primal laws of the heavenly Reason revealed in wise customs—that is to practise the humane virtue.<sup>10</sup> In one day a man should put off his tendencies and uncontrolled desires and return to practise the primal laws. . . . *Yen-Yüan said* “*Let me ask what are the main features of this virtue.*” *The Sage said:* Look at nothing contrary to the rites, hear nothing contrary to the rites, say nothing contrary to the rites, and do nothing contrary to the rites. (L. 12 : 1) He who is sober in words is gifted with the humane virtue. . . . When to practise humanity is hard, must one not be sober in speaking of it? (L. 12 : 3)

4. Always have a grave and dignified manner in private life; always be alert and watchful in managing affairs; in contact with others, be true and faithful to your promises. Even when you go among the barbarians you should never neglect these principles. (L. 13 : 19)

<sup>10</sup> S., is again more terse: Virtue is the denial of self and response to what is right and proper.



The first words of the section show Khung-Tsü as abreast of the most modern psychology. One can never climb a hill by sitting at its foot and bemoaning its height and roughness. Virtues can be attained, not by thinking how hard they are to win or how wicked we are, but by realising that they are *now* in the heart, otherwise they could never have been imagined or desired at all. Of course, it takes much time and effort perfectly to bring such a hidden virtue into action, but if nothing is allowed to stop the practice of it nothing can prevent us from building it into our character and daily life. The virtue of "humanity" is admired by all; men may offend against the holy elements of fire and water, but none can ever suffer from being humane.

Humanity is defined as reverent courtesy and doing nothing to others that we admit would be unpleasant if done to ourselves. Again, the Golden Rule in its negative form (cf. § 14 : 2).

The favourite disciple is given another definition, one perhaps more suitable to his own nature. It is self-control in sight, hearing, speech and action, and the following of the wise customs laid down by the Inner Light of pure Intelligence. This looks very like the control of the *karmendriyas* and the *jnyānendriyas* laid down in the Gītā, (cf. Gītā 2 : 56-59).

The qualities of dignity, alertness, and faithfulness are to be adhered to even among those who are unworthy of honourable treatment and who are most unlikely to return it (cf. GJ 13 : 5).

## 25. The Practice of Humanity

1. *Tsü-Kung said: "If a man were to show extreme kindness to the people and busy*



*himself solely with the happiness of the crowd, what should be thought of him? Could he be called gifted with the virtue of humanity?"*

*The Sage said:* Why be satisfied with the word "humanity"? Would he not rather be a Saint? . . . The humane man wishes to establish himself and then to establish others; he wishes to know the nature of things and then to make them known to others. To have enough control over oneself, to judge others by ourselves, and to treat them as we would have them treat ourselves—that is what may be called the doctrine of humanity; there is nothing beyond. (L. 6 : 28)

2. It is only the humane who can truly love men or hate them in a proper way. If your thought is really turned towards the humane virtues, you will do no evil. (L. 4 : 3-4)

The educated man who has great and lofty thoughts, the man gifted with the virtue of humanity, never tries to harm human beings. Such would prefer rather to give themselves up to death in order to crown their virtue. The workman who wants to do his work well must begin by sharpening his tools. When you live in any State whatsoever, mix with the



wise among its great officials (in order to copy them), and link yourself in friendship with the humane and virtuous among the educated. (L. 15 : 8-9)

3. The clever rejoice in water ; the humane in hills. The clever man has restlessness in him ; the humane man has repose. The clever man has bursts of joy ; the humane man has eternity for himself. (L. 6 : 21)

4. The resolute man never forgets that his body may well be thrown into a ditch or a pit full of water. The brave man never forgets that he may lose his head. (M. 6 : 1) The man of principle must be also bold, but he who is bold may not have the virtue of humanity. (L. 14 : 5) There have been cultured men not gifted with the humane virtue, but never yet has a man without merit possessed the virtue of humanity. (L. 14 : 7) Those who are without humanity cannot long abide in poverty, nor can they long be virtuous in prosperity. Those who are full of humanity find repose in virtue, and those who are wise seek in it their welfare. (L. 4 : 2)

5. Humanity, or the feeling of kindness to others, is well practised in the (L. 4 : 1)



villages ! if one who can choose the site of his home does not go to live where kindness dwells (M. 3 : 7), can he be considered wise ? (L. 4 : 1) How can he win the name of a wise man ? Now this humanity is the most honourable dignity conferred by Heaven, and the calm abode of men. None prevents us from being kind ; if we are not humane, it means that we are not wise and enlightened. He who is neither humane, nor wise and enlightened, who has neither politeness nor equity, is the slave of man. . . If he blushes at his condition, there is nothing like the practice of humanity (for getting out of it). (M. 3 : 7) There are only two great ways in the world—that of humanity, and that of inhumanity ; that is all.<sup>11</sup> (M. 7 : 7) He who loved virtue would esteem nothing as above it. (L. 4 : 6)

The Saint is the man who loves people and is always serving them (cf. GJ 73 : 1, 88 : 2, 109). The humane virtue is really study and teaching, self-control, and the treatment of others as we would ourselves like to be treated. Notice here for the first time the positive form of the Golden Rule (cf. § 14 : 2 and § 24 : 2), more as we have it in GJ 13 : 6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. Krishnamurti in *At the Feet of the Master* (1947 ed.), p. 14 : "In all the world there are only two kinds of people—those who know, and those who do not know."



Only he who really understands others can either love or hate them truly. And such a one will never harm another, as the French say, "Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner !" (that is, "To understand all is to forgive all."). No, his "hatred" will be impersonal, directing itself solely to those things in the life of the other which bring him sorrow, and so trying to free him of that sorrow ; it is really a curative form of love (cf. GI 79, GJ 16-17, 50 : 2, 100). He will be so drawn to the loving study of others, in order to help them more wisely, that this virtue will become a burning passion in his life. To gain virtues, you must mix with the virtuous. Goethe puts this : "He who would be a poet must enter the land of poetry" (cf. also § 21 : 3, GJ 97 : 3 and GI 69).<sup>12</sup>

The benefits of education, in the ordinary sense, and humanity are here contrasted ; the former gives a constant flow of bubbling joy that wells up in the heart with ever-widening interests, the latter a steady calm of unending bliss.

True courage is needed for the spiritual path (cf. GI 90, GJ 67 : 1, 120 : 2). Men may be classed in three grades : those without merit, educated men, and humane men. Only the highest grade can be steady in virtue amid success and failure, whether rich or poor, honoured or despised.<sup>13</sup> They take their delight in that virtue which is itself the one true reward of education and culture.

The humane virtues are more easily to be found in the quiet countryside, so the wise man will flee town

<sup>12</sup> Note also how Khung rightly shows the dependence of our acts upon our prior thoughts. The hater *does* commit murder in intent. cf. § 38 : 4.

<sup>13</sup> Compare what the Buddha says in Dhammapada : "One path leads to worldly gain, but quite another leads to Nirvana," (5 : 16), and "Wise persons remain unaffected by praise or blame," (Dh, 6 : 6). Also the warning against wealth Jesus gave his disciples in GJ 79.



life into the calm repose of rural scenes where virtue has free sway. Spiritual uplift can be found only in this sublime virtue. Something makes us wonder if Khung-Tsū utters this verse in a mood of weariness and disillusionment when turning away from the deceits and broken promises and shattered hopes of a court, once more to take the road on his long and weary wanderings from State to State, seeking a Prince who really cared for wisdom.

## 26. Who is the Cultured Man ?

1. *Ssü-ma-Nieu asked who the cultured man is. The Sage said*: The cultured man feels neither regrets nor fear. *Sse exclaimed*: *What ! Is it the man who feels neither regrets nor fear whom one should call the cultured man ?*" *The Sage replied*: He who looking into himself finds nothing painful there, what should he regret ? what is he to fear ? (L. 12 : 4)

2. The cultured man does not try to satisfy his appetite when he is at table, nor does he seek the pleasures of idleness and indolence when he is at home. He attends to his duties and watches his words ; he seeks the company of those with good principles so as to guide his conduct by them. Such a man can really be called a Sage, one who loves to study wisdom. (L. 1 : 14)



3. The cultured man has no quarrels or disputes with anyone. If such a thing happens to him, . . . he gives place to his opponent as they climb up into the hall ; then he comes down from there to drink a cup with him. Even in his contests he is still the cultured man. (L. 3 : 7) “ *Has the cultured man the feelings of hate and aversion ?* ” asked Tsü-Kung. *The Sage said* : He does have in him feelings of hatred and aversion. He detests those who expose the faults of others ; he abhors those mean folk who slander their betters ; he detests the brave and strong who despise good manners ; he hates the bold and rash who stop in the middle (of their ventures without caring to finish them). (L. 17 : 24) Where the cultured man (the Philosopher) lives, how could meanness and degradation be there ? (L. 9 : 13)

4. If the cultured man gives up the humane virtues, how can he fulfil his reputation ? The cultured man never for one instant disregards humanity, even in the busiest and most disturbed moments he clings to it. (L. 4 : 5) There are three things for the cultured man to avoid. In the time of youth, when the blood and vitality are not yet settled, he



guards against sensuality ; when maturity is attained and the blood and vitality have gained all their force and vigour, he avoids disputes and quarrels ; when he has grown old and the blood and vitality are growing languid, he guards against the desire to gather wealth. (L. 16 : 7)

5. The cultured man likes to be slow in his words, but swift to act. (L. 4 : 24) (He) blushes in fear lest his words go beyond his deeds.<sup>14</sup> (L. 14 : 29) He who speaks without prudence puts his words into effect with difficulty, (L. 14 : 21) (so) the ancients never let vain words escape, fearing that their actions might not agree. (L. 4 : 22) (The cultured man) is he who first puts his words into practice and then speaks according to his deeds. (L. 2 : 13)

6. Unless one believes himself charged to fulfil a mission,<sup>15</sup> he cannot be a cultured man. Unless one knows the laws of right conduct he cannot fix his character. Unless one knows the value of words, he cannot know

<sup>14</sup> Or : as S. puts it : is modest in what he says, but surpasses in what he does.

<sup>15</sup> Or : If one does not know the divine law.



men themselves. (L. 20 : 3) If the scholar is not grave in conduct, he will inspire no respect, and then his knowledge will lack stability. Let him constantly observe sincerity and faithfulness, form no friendships with those inferior to himself, and if he make any mistake, let him not fear to correct himself. (L. 1 : 8)

The Cultured Man is the one who finds no evil in his own heart. So he does not suspect others, nor does he feel either fear of them or regret for anything he himself has said or done. "An easy conscience is the mother of an easy mind."

He quietly goes on doing his own duty, avoids all excess, and seeks the company of the virtuous (cf. §§ 21 : 3, 25 : 2).

He neither argues nor quarrels, but leaves all the triumphs in dispute to others. Yet he hates and avoids those who criticise others, slander their betters, defy custom, or because of cowardice fail to carry out their plans and promises. It is better even to do wrong honestly than to abstain only from cowardice.

He clings always to the humane virtues ; in youth he shuns pleasure, in maturity conflict, in old age greed and luxury.

He keeps his words in harmony with his deeds, promises little, and tries always to act first and then talk afterwards. Rash words can rarely be fulfilled, and they are the sign of un wisdom (cf. GI 83 : 1, Dh. 4 : 8, GJ 13 : 3). "Actions speak louder than words," and if we only act there will usually be less need



for words ; that will leave us with more time and energy for other actions. Oh, that the world's politicians would learn this most salutary of lessons !

He has always full faith in his life-work, looking on it as a trust from Heaven to be faithfully fulfilled. He knows it should be guided only by the proprieties. He is serious in conduct and in study, never swerves from the truth, never mixes freely with his inferiors, and is ready at all times to admit his errors and amend his ways.

## 27. The Cultured and the Common

1. The cultured man develops the good qualities of others, he does not develop their bad tendencies ; the common man does the opposite. (L. 12 : 16) The cultured man continually raises himself (in intelligence and penetration) ; the man without merits constantly sinks lower (into ignorance and vice). (L. 14 : 24) The cultured man shows no pomp or pride at all if he finds himself in a high position ; the common man shows pomp and pride even without being in any exalted place.<sup>16</sup> (L. 13 : 26) The cultured man fixes his thoughts on virtue ; the common man attaches them to the earth. The cultured

<sup>16</sup> *Or* : position. S. puts this : The well-bred are dignified but not pompous. The ill-bred are pompous, but not dignified.



man concerns himself solely with carrying out the laws; the common man thinks only of profits. (L. 4 : 11) The cultured man bears want unshaken; the common man in need becomes demoralized. (L. 15 : 1) The cultured man is swayed by justice, while the common man is moved by the love of gain. (L. 4 : 16) The cultured man has an equal kindness for all and is without egoism or partiality; the common man has only egoistic feelings with no kindly disposition for all men. (L. 2 : 14) The cultured man lives in peace with all even when acting in a different way; the common man acts consistently without always harmonising himself with others.<sup>17</sup> (L. 13 : 23)

2. The cultured man is easily served but hard to please; if one tries to please him by unreasonable means he is not satisfied at all. When he appoints men for work, he chooses them according to their powers. The common man is hard to serve but easily satisfied; if one tries to please him even by unreasonable means, he is satisfied, but in appointing men

<sup>17</sup> Or: The rue gentleman is friendly, but not familiar; the inferior man is familiar but not friendly. (S.)



for work he seeks only his own personal advantage.<sup>18</sup> (L. 13 : 25)

3. The cultured man cannot be known and well appreciated in little things, but he can undertake great things. On the other hand, the common man being unable to undertake great things can be known and appreciated in the small. (L. 15 : 33) The cultured man asks for nothing but from himself; the common man demands everything from others. (L. 15 : 20) The cultured man is calm and has a tranquil mind; the common man feels trouble and constant anxiety. (L. 7 : 36) The virtues of a cultured man are like the wind, while the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass bows down when the wind passes over it. (L. 12 : 19)

4. *Tsü-Lu asked, "Does the cultured man value manly courage highly?" The Sage said:* The cultured man puts equity and justice above all. If the cultured man has courage without justice, he foments sedition. The common man who has courage without justice becomes a robber. (L. 17 : 23) There are three things the cultured man reveres: He reveres

<sup>18</sup> *Or:* he expects them to be fit for everything.



the decrees of Heaven, he reveres great men, he reveres the words of Saints. Common men do not know Heaven's decrees and so they do not revere them, they make little of great men, and they jest at the words of Saints. (L. 16 : 8)

The whole of this Section contains a series of contrasts between the good and bad that brings out more fully the real nature of that Culture which is the true aim of education. Note how *very* little stress the Chinese classics lay on the mere getting and memorising of facts, which largely dominates our so-called Western education in India. What is to be memorised is the "Classics" themselves; they are the mine from which can be quarried endless gems of wisdom whenever needed. This wisdom enlightens the student on how to live in the world, which is his main business. The capacity to name the rivers of Asia in a clockwise direction forms no part whatever of true education, nor does the correct repetition of the names of Delhi kinglets show that the pupil has been educated and has not wasted his time and the teacher's and his parent's money. Khung-Tsü had a better idea of educational content than that.

## THE ORDINARY MAN

Spoils others.  
Sinks lower into vice.  
Takes pride even in a low place.  
Thinks of worldly things.  
Thinks of profits he can make.  
Cannot even meet his needs.  
Is swayed by greed.  
Has no kindness in his heart.  
Has only egoism.  
Does not try to adjust with others.  
Goes on in the same course.

## THE CULTURED MAN

Perfects others.  
Raises himself to wisdom.  
Takes no pride in a high place.  
Thinks of virtue.  
Thinks of obeying the Law.  
Keeps strength in reserve.  
Is swayed by justice.  
Is equally kind to all.  
Has no egoism or partiality.  
Is at peace with all.  
Adapts himself to circumstances.



## THE ORDINARY MAN

Is hard to serve.  
Is easy to satisfy.  
Uses any means to his hand.  
Uses men in his own interest.

Cannot do great things.  
Small things reveal his nature.

Asks all from others.  
Is troubled and restless.  
His virtues are overcome.

Does not know Heaven's decrees.  
Makes little of great men.  
Mocks at words of Saints.

## THE CULTURED MAN

Is easily served.  
Is hard to satisfy.  
Uses only right means.  
Uses men's capacities for common good.

Can do great things.  
Small things do not bring out his nature.

Asks all from himself.  
Is calm and peaceful.  
His virtues spread over the world.

Reveres Heaven's decrees.  
Reveres great men.  
Reveres the words of Saints.

Bravery, unless controlled by a deep sense of justice, will only lead to cruelty, violence and sedition.

The above table explains itself. It has hundreds of parallels in almost all the world's Scriptures, and it would be profitless to try to quote these here. They mark out the true field of education, the aim of which must be to draw men, and women, from the qualities of the left hand column out and across into the qualities of the right hand column.

## 28. The Life of the Cultured Man

1. In all life's circumstances the cultured man is free from prejudices and stubbornness; he guides himself solely upon justice. (L. 4: 10) (He) always guides himself by uprightness and truth, and he has no obstinacy<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> S. says: The wise man is intelligently, not blindly, loyal.



(L. 15 : 36) (He) makes equity and justice the basis of all he does; practises it with all courtesy, carries it out with modesty and perfects it with sincerity. Is not such a man cultured? (L. 15 : 17) The cultured man works hard to educate himself, and in using knowledge attaches great importance to the rites of good behaviour. By acting in this way he cannot depart from the right Reason. (L. 6 : 25) The cultured man is no machine. (L. 2 : 12)

2. The cultured man is sad about his inability (to do good); he does not feel sorry to be unknown to men. (L. 15 : 18) The cultured man makes the Straight Path his aim: he feels no anxiety about a living. If you till the soil, hunger even then often appears among you; but if you study, happiness appears in the very midst of the study. (L. 15 : 31)

3. The cultured man dislikes to end his life without leaving praiseworthy deeds behind him. (L. 15 : 19) The cultured man is firm in his resolves without having conflicts with anyone<sup>20</sup>; he lives at peace with the crowd

<sup>20</sup> Or: The noble man upholds his dignity without striving for it. (S.)



without being of the crowd. (He) does not extol a man for his words, nor does he reject words because of the man who has spoken them. (L. 15 : 21-22) He constantly tries to improve himself, so as to draw respect to him. Is that all he does ? He constantly improves himself, so as to ease the lot of others. "*Is that all he does ?*" asked Tsü-lu. He constantly improves himself, so as to make all people happy. (L. 14 : 45) The cultured man ceaselessly watches over himself with serious attention ; with others he is always dignified and courteous, looking on all surrounded by the four seas as brothers. (L. 12 : 5)

4. The four qualities of a cultured man **are**: His actions **are** marked by serious dignity, he **is** respectful in serving his superior, he **is** full of kind anxiety in the care he **takes** for the welfare of others, and he **is** just and fair in directing them. (L. 5. : 15)

5. The cultured man has nine main topics for meditation: In looking, he thinks of observing clearly ; in hearing, he thinks of correctly understanding ; in his appearance, he thinks of being calm and serene ; in his manner, he thinks of always remaining courteous ;



in his words, he thinks of conscientiousness; in his actions, he thinks of always drawing respect to himself<sup>21</sup>; in his doubts, he thinks of asking others; in anger, he thinks of self-control; in seeing gains to be secured, he thinks of justice. (L. 16 : 10)

6. The main principles of the cultured man are three in number, which I have not yet been able fully to attain: the virtue of humanity which frees from sorrow, knowledge which frees from spiritual doubt, and virile courage which frees from fear. *Tsü-Kung said, "Our Master speaks too humbly of himself."* (L. 14 : 30)

In this section we learn more of the life and attitude of the truly cultured man. He has no fixed ideas, but governs his acts and opinions solely by fact. In his manner always modest and cautious, in his daily life he is devoted to study. This study is not only of books, but also, or even more, of life and of human reactions to life.

His anxiety is to help others, and not to be known or appreciated by them. Nor does he care about wealth or poverty so long as he can cling to virtue. He does not worry about his food or drink (cf. GJ 69 and GI 11), for bread-labour does not prevent hunger, while study always gives you satisfaction.

He is eager to do good during his lifetime and to leave the world a little happier because he has lived in

<sup>21</sup> Or : being earnest.



it. He steadily adheres to peacefulness and has no partiality for anyone, but is ready to accept truth and good advice from any source (cf. § 19 : 5). He is always rectifying his own character and conduct, so that he may give only happiness to others ; he looks on all, no matter of what race or caste, as his own brothers. We are pleasantly surprised by this touch of true democracy coming to us out of the far distant past. When, Oh when, will the world come up to this ?

His four chief characteristics are dignity, courtesy, consideration and impartiality.

His main care is to learn all he can, to maintain his self-respect on true bases, and to be wholly true in everything.

The principles of his life soon destroy the three great enemies, sorrow, doubt, and fear, and bring his mind to that eternal calm wherein the ultimate Truth is known.

I think all who read this section will agree with me that this description of China's Cultured or Superior Man really comes very close to our own idea of the perfect Gentleman. Read Cardinal Newman's famous Essay on this subject again, and compare it with our old Chinese Sage. With characteristic modesty, of course, Khung-fu-Tsū adds that he himself has not yet been able fully to reach this ideal. How many have ?

## 29. The Joys of the Good Man

1. Is it not indeed a pleasure to give yourself to study truth and to apply yourself steadily to it ? Is it not also a great pleasure to see approaching you men drawn from



afar by a common sentiment ? To be unknown or misunderstood by others and not to be vexed thereat, is it not the quality of a true philosopher ? (L. 1 : 1)

2. He who is taught by Reason does not hesitate ; he who has the virtue of humanity feels no regret ; he who is brave is free from fear. (L. 9 : 28) He is a man who forgets to take food because he is so eager to gain knowledge ; he forgets pain because of his joy on gaining it ; and he does not notice the coming of old age. (L. 7 : 18)

3. Man's nature is straight ; if this natural straightness comes to be lost during life, then all happiness has been driven far away.<sup>22</sup> The one who knows the principles of Reason<sup>23</sup> is not equal to the one who likes them ; nor is he who likes them equal to the one who delights in the practice of them. (L. 7 : 15) To feed on a little rice, to drink water, to have a bent arm as a pillow, is a state which also has its own satisfaction. Wealth and honour won unrighteously are for me like a floating cloud.

<sup>22</sup> S. has here : Without (straightness) he is lucky to escape with his life !

<sup>23</sup> Or : who knows the truth.



4. There are three kinds of useful friends, and three kinds that are harmful. Honest friends, faithful friends, and friends of enlightened mind, are useful friends. The friends who pretend to gravity, friends full of flattery, friends who have only empty chatter, are harmful friends. (L. 16 : 4)

5. Three kinds of joys are useful, and there are three that are harmful. The satisfaction of a deep interest in manners and in music, the satisfaction of teaching men the principles of virtue,<sup>24</sup> and the satisfaction of having the friendship of many wise men, are the useful joys or satisfactions. The satisfaction which gives vanity or pride,<sup>25</sup> the pleasure of idleness and softness, the pleasure of costly luxury, these are harmful. (L. 16 : 5)

You can find great joy when you concentrate on the Truth and when you meet fellow-seekers from afar ; the good man does not feel sad when he is unknown or misunderstood.

He has no doubts, regrets or fears, but is so intensely devoted to study that he even forgets the body ; the delights he finds in wisdom drown all pain and anxiety.

<sup>24</sup> Or : discussing the excellences of others. (S.)

<sup>25</sup> Or : unbridled enjoyment. (S.)



Man begins life virtuous (cf. §§ 37, 44, GH 29 : 11 and GI 65 : 1), and he can be happy only if he retains this first sincerity (cf. Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*). The best is he who delights in and practises virtue even in the greatest poverty (cf. § 34 : 1, GJ 68 : 1), for wealth cannot bring a man true happiness (cf. GI 75, GJ 78-79, 82, and 1 *Tim.* 6 : 10).

We should choose only the true, steady and wise as our friends, and avoid hypocrites, flatterers and talkers (cf. § 31 : 1).

Three useful joys are those of appreciating the laws of harmony, teaching others, and enjoying the company of good people; thus we find delight in receiving, giving, and sharing. We should shun the pleasures of fame, idleness and luxury.

### 30. The Filial Duties

1. Duty must come first, its fruit only in the second place. Is not that the gaining of virtues? To fight one's own failings and not those of others, is not that the correction of one's faults? To lose (control of) your body by the anger of a single morning, so as to bring (misfortune) on your parents, is not that irrational? (L. 12 : 21)

2. (Filial obedience) consists in not opposing the principles of Reason.<sup>26</sup> During the life

<sup>26</sup> in not being disobedient. (S.)



of your father and mother, you must give them what is rightly due (according to the principles of the innate Reason inspired in us by Heaven). (L. 2 : 5) So long as your father and mother live, do not leave them ; if you do go far away, you must let them know your destination. (L. 4 : 19) When they die, it is also necessary to bury them with ceremonial rites, (which are only the social expression of the heavenly Reason) and then to offer them the proper sacrifices. (L. 2 : 5) During your father's life, carefully observe his wishes ; after his death, always keep the eyes fixed on his actions. The son who, for three years after his father dies, never swerves from his ways may be called truly filial. (L. 1 : 11)

3. Children must have filial piety at home and fraternal courtesy<sup>27</sup> outside. They must be careful in their actions, truthful in speech, towards all men, whom they should love with all the power and width of their affection, while specially attaching themselves to the virtuous. And if they still have energy left after carrying out these duties, they should apply themselves to (adorning their mind

<sup>27</sup> Or : respect for their elders.



through) study and (to gaining knowledge and) talents. (L. 1 : 6) When **you** are outside **your** home, do **your** duties to your superior magistrates ; when **you** are at home, do **your** duty to **your** father and mother and brothers. Do not allow **yourself** any neglect in the funeral rites. Do not give **yourself** to any excess in wine. How could I tolerate the opposite conduct ? <sup>28</sup> (L. 9 : 15)

Do what is right, and leave the results to look after themselves (cf. § 36 : 2 and *Gītā* 2 : 47). See to your own faults rather than the weaknesses of others (cf. GJ 51 and GI 50 : 2) : it is indeed a great evil when we lose our tempers and so bring sorrow to others, especially if those others be those to whom we owe our love and reverence.

We must honour and obey our parents (cf. *Exod.* 20 : 12), and look after them as long as they live (cf. GI 82), and when they die we must bury them with all respect, remembering for our guidance throughout life all that they used to do.

Children should be loyal and polite, truthful, loving, and fond of study. Wine is to be used only in moderation (cf. GI 74, 87).

### 31. On Social Conduct

1. To put sincerity and fidelity to your word in the first place, and to devote yourself

<sup>28</sup> Or : In which of these am I successful ? (S.)



of your father and mother, you must give them what is rightly due (according to the principles of the innate Reason inspired in us by Heaven). (L. 2 : 5) So long as your father and mother live, do not leave them ; if you do go far away, you must let them know your destination. (L. 4 : 19) When they die, it is also necessary to bury them with ceremonial rites, (which are only the social expression of the heavenly Reason) and then to offer them the proper sacrifices. (L. 2 : 5) During your father's life, carefully observe his wishes ; after his death, always keep the eyes fixed on his actions. The son who, for three years after his father dies, never swerves from his ways may be called truly filial. (L. 1 : 11)

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## PHILOSOPHIC DISCOURSE

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### 31. On Social Conduct

1. To put sincerity and fidelity to your word in the first place, and to devote yourself

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to all that is just—that is (the way) to gather virtues. (L. 12 : 10) Always put straightness of heart and faithfulness first; never make friends with those who are unlike yourself; if you make a mistake, then do not fear to change (your) conduct. (L. 9 : 24) As the principles of conduct differ (for each), one cannot help another by (detailed) advice.<sup>29</sup> (L. 15 : 39) To seek the truth sincerely, to give the result of that search with the same sincerity, always to have a courteous and obliging air,—these may be called the conditions for a scholar. Friends are to be treated sincerely and gently, brothers with courtesy and compliance. (L. 13 : 28)

2. Will not language that is sincere and that also conforms with right Reason gain general approval? But it is a change of conduct, (a turning to virtue) which is better than all else. Will not persuasive language cause satisfaction to the hearer? Yet it is the search for truth that is of real value. To feel satisfaction when you hear flattering talk, and not to search for truth, mere approval of language

<sup>29</sup> Here S. has: Those whose ways are different do not make plans together.



that is both sincere and reasonable, without turning oneself to virtue—why, that is what I myself can never approve or do.<sup>30</sup> (L. 9 : 23)

3. *Tsü-Chang asked how one should behave in life.*<sup>31</sup> *The Sage said* : Let your words be sincere and truthful, your deeds always honourable and worthy, even when you are in the barbarian lands to the south and the north, (then) you will succeed. But if your words are not sincere and truthful, your deeds always honourable and worthy, even when you are in your own country how are you likely to succeed? When at rest, have these maxims always under your eyes; when in your chariot, see them written on the crossbar (of your shaft); in this way your conduct will succeed. *Tsü-Chang wrote these maxims on his sash.* (L. 15 : 5)

4. Have a care for all the world, without distinction of class or rank. (L. 15 : 38) The love of humanity, without the love of study, is obscured by stupidity; the love of knowledge, without the love of study, is darkened by vague imaginings; the love of sincerity

<sup>30</sup> S. has : I can do nothing whatever with men of such calibre.

<sup>31</sup> Or : how to succeed with others. (S.)



and faithfulness, without the love of study, is obscured by harshness; the love of right, without the love of study, is obscured by thoughtless rashness; the love of daring, without the love of study, is obscured by indiscipline; the love of strength and steadiness, without the love of study, is darkened by mad obstinacy. (L. 17 : 8) If when you have reached the age of forty years you still draw blame to yourself, it is all over; there is nothing more to hope for. (L. 17 : 26)

5. How could vile and unworthy men help the Prince? Before they get employment such men are already tormented with the fear of missing it, and when they have it they are tormented with the fear of losing it. From (that) moment . . . there is nothing they may not do. (L. 17 : 15) Never be restless at not occupying a public office, but be restless to gain the talents needed for holding it. Never be vexed at being still unknown, but try to be worthy of being known. (L. 4 : 14)

6. Those who seek the votes of townsmen are thieves of morale; <sup>32</sup> those who hear and

<sup>32</sup> S. has: Your honest countryman is the spoiler of morals (because he hates any change).



discuss a matter on the public road abandon virtue. (L. 17 : 13-14) Not to rebel at being deceived by men, not to protect yourself against their faithlessness even when you have foreseen it, is not that being wise?<sup>33</sup> (L. 14 : 33) Be severe towards yourselves and mild towards others; you will then drive away resentment from you. (L. 15 : 14) *Someone asked, "What should be thought of the one who returns good for injury?" The Sage said:* Then with what would you repay good deeds? No, you must repay enmity with justice, and benefits with benefits. (L. 14 : 36)

Sincerity and truth must come first, and then devotion to justice, avoiding bad friends (*cf. Dhammapada* 15 : 10-11, and 25 : 17) and frankly amending our own faults. It is very unwise to meddle with others for we can hardly know the path laid down by their own *swadharma*. What is good for us may be very bad for them. Even to-day the proper law for scientists and scholars is the sincere and honest search for truth and the courteous and generous sharing in our discoveries with others. Alas that political fears and jealousies have corrupted science with the secrecies hung round some shattering modern discoveries, like the atom bomb

Sincerity wins all hearts, though sweet words may please the ear for a while. The noblest work on earth

<sup>33</sup> Or, as S. puts it: Is not he a man of real worth who does not anticipate deceit nor imagine that people will doubt his word. . .



is to seek truth and follow honestly the path of virtue. Without sincerity we can never find truth.

Sincerity must be shown to all, even to those who may neither understand nor value it. We must always keep truthfulness and honourable conduct in our minds, and it is good to keep written mottoes before our eyes to remind us of them. That is one of the great powers of the Name of God ; if we spend every leisure moment with Him in our minds, we cannot go very far astray. All religions have taught this, in some form.

Treat all equally, whoever they may be. China, the land of aristocracy, gave the world twenty-six centuries ago the only true foundation for democracy. Would that the West, with its race-prides and its many exploitations—would that India, with her caste-prides and her jealousies, could learn this noble lesson ! Then they would set their feet on the path that leads to real democracy, and discard the sham that now masquerades in its holy name ! Then the United Nations would be able to remove the causes of war that still lurk under our feet. Intense concentration on the truth can remedy all defects or lack in the other virtues.

Selfish motives and fears prevent worthless men from giving loyal service to others or finding contentment for themselves. The wise are never eager for appointments, but eager to be fit for giving service.

The wise man never discusses private matters in public, nor does he get angry when betrayed or disappointed by others. He does not even try to protect himself from their treachery, but by constant gentleness at last wins their love (cf. GJ 13 : 5, 27 : 2, 50, and GI 79). Here is an almost Gandhian teaching of *satyāgraha* ! Injustice is to be met by calm justice, and kindness returned with kindness (cf. GJ 13 : 5 and GI 50 : 4 and 79 : 2).



### 32. Rules for Rulers

1. Unless you hold a post (under government), do not discuss its policy. (L. 8:14) Let the Prince be Prince, the minister minister, the father father, and the son son. (L. 12:11) Those who are round Princes (to help them in their duties) have to avoid three faults: speaking without being asked, which is called "haste"; not speaking even when asked, which is called "taciturnity"; speaking without noticing the face and the mood (of the Prince), which is called "blindness". (L. 16:6) If the Empire is governed by the principles of right Reason, then the administration does not rest in the hands of ministers; if the Empire is governed reasonably, then the crowd do not trouble to discuss acts that concern the Imperial authority. (L. 16:2)

2. Reflect tirelessly upon doing good, and then do everything straightforwardly. (L. 12:14) Listen much; to lessen your doubts, watch what you say, and say nothing without need; then you will rarely make mistakes. See much, to lessen the dangers of not being informed of what is going on; carefully



watch what you do, and you will rarely have to be sorry. If you rarely make mistakes in your words or have to be sorry for your deeds, then you already have the promotion you desire. (L. 2 : 18)

3. Do not try to go too fast (in carrying on business), and do not keep petty personal ends in view. If you are in haste, then you will not fully understand ; if you have petty personal ends in view, then the big affairs will not be accomplished. (L. 13 : 17) So far as your powers allow carry out your duty ; if you cannot carry it out, then give up your office. If a man in danger is not saved, if he is not held up when falling down, then what is the use of his helpers ? (L. 16 : 1) Heaven does not have two suns ; nor do the people have two sovereigns. (M. 9 : 4)

4. First give the people an example of industry in your own person. (L. 13 : 1) If a ruler is himself turned towards right and equity, he has no need to order good to get it done ; if he is not himself inclined to righteousness, even when he does order good he will not be obeyed. (L. 13 : 6) If he does not rule himself by principles of justice and right,



how can he set right the conduct of others? If one rules himself by principles of equity and right, then what difficulty will he find in running the government? (L. 13 : 13)

5. When the new sovereign (is) humane, one (can) not consider his opponents numerous. If the head of a kingdom loves mankind, he will have neither enemy nor rival in the Empire. (M. 7 : 7) If he who holds the first rank in the State loves to conform himself with the Rites, then the people let him govern easily. (L. 14 : 44) Virtue (in a good government) flows like a river faster than the rider who carries royal decrees. (M. 3 : 1) Even if I had the mandate of royalty, it would take a generation to make virtue reign everywhere. (L. 13 : 12)

6. Ever since the remotest antiquity all men have been subject to death. But a people who have no faith (in or loyalty to those who govern them) cannot survive. (L. 12 : 7) Promote honest men, and dismiss the corrupt men ; then the people will obey you. Promote corrupt men and dismiss the honest, and the people will disobey you. (L. 2 : 19)

7. If distant people are refractory, then cultivate knowledge and virtue so as to draw



them to you. Once they return to obedience, then let them enjoy peace and tranquillity. (L. 16 : 1) Satisfy those who are near to you, and those who are far off will run up by themselves. (L. 13 : 16)

8. What need have you who govern public affairs to use punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. (L. 12 : 19) The people can be made to follow a reasonable course; they cannot be forced to understand it. (L. 8 : 9) Government is what is just and right. If you govern with righteousness, who will dare to be unjust and crooked? (L. 12 : 17) To see the right and not to do it, is cowardice. (L. 2 : 24)

9. He who can achieve five things everywhere is gifted with the humane virtue. . . : courtesy and self-respect, generosity, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness to others. If you observe respect for yourself and others in all you do, then you will not be despised by anyone. If you are generous, then you will win the people's love. If you are sincere and faithful, then men will put their trust in you. If you are devoted to good, then you will succeed; and if you are kind, then you



will have all that is needed for governing men. (L. 17 : 6) To govern your country with the needful virtue and capacity is to be like the Pole Star, which stays unmoving in its place while all the other stars revolve around it. (L. 2 : 1)

Never meddle with the work of others. Each should do his own work and give up criticism. Give advice when asked, and use words palatable to the hearer. Then 'all will quietly obey and co-operate with so wise and sensible a ruler.

Think wisely, act kindly, and behave honourably. Listen much and speak little, see all and act with caution; then you will make few mistakes and all will honour you.

“More haste, less speed.” (cf. § 38 : 3) Do your work in calm deliberation, never in a hurry, and do not seek your own fortune through it. Do your best in office, or resign. While you hold office you must protect others, for they have only you to look to.

Be an example to others, and then they will naturally do good; your words alone could never secure this end. The unjust man can never get others to act with justice, nor can the liar teach truthfulness; the lover of truth naturally in time evokes truthfulness from others. The Imperialist who prates of democratic freedom for all nations is a pitiful sight!

A good man and ruler has few foes but easily wins support, and others will soon imitate his virtues.

Death is inevitable (cf. GI 64 : 71) for individuals, but even a nation will perish when it does not love its rulers. If you would win love and obedience, you must choose good men to work with and under you.



Knowledge and virtue attract even distant folk, who will eagerly try to share the peace and contentment you have ensured to those near at hand. This is the only way a nation can rightly spread its influence, not by threats or trade or violence. The well-governed Kingdom becomes naturally the centre of a voluntary Commonwealth of free nations.

There is really no need to punish anyone if only you yourself are wise and good, for all will follow your example if it be consistent. This is a maxim of use to the discreet teacher ! (cf. *Gītā* 3 : 21)

The ruler needs five qualities: self-respect, generosity, truth, service and kindness. These win for him understanding, love, trust, the virtues and the power of good government. He then becomes able to guide and inspire all who see him. True words, and worthy to be noted by all who aspire to leadership or public office!

### 33. General Aphorisms

1. The sense of the three hundred odes of the Book of Verses is contained in one of its sentences: "Let your purpose never be perverse." (L. 2 : 2) Alas, I have never seen anyone who loved virtue as bodily beauty is loved! (L. 15 : 12) How to come out of a house without passing through the door? Then why do not men follow the Straight Path? (L. 6 : 15) Virtue does not remain like an abandoned orphan; it must needs have



neighbours. (L. 4 : 25) Artful phrases, an exquisite and affected exterior, very rarely go with sincere virtue. (L. 1 : 3)

2. The man who never thinks about the distant future will find some sorrow near. (L. 15 : 11) Steadiness in the "Poise" is what makes up virtue; is not that the fact? But men very rarely persevere in it. (L. 6 : 27) There are few who understand virtue. (L. 15 : 3) Those who err while remaining on their guard are very rare! (L. 4 : 23) What is the humane virtue? To love your fellow men... What is knowledge? To know your fellow men. (L. 12 : 22) I need not be vexed that men do not know me but that I myself do not know them. (L. 1 : 16) If one loves well, cannot one also chastise well? <sup>34</sup> (L. 14 : 8) To go too far is as bad as not going far enough. (L. 11 : 15)

3. It is hard to be poor without complaining; it is easy to be rich without boasting about it. (L. 14. 11) From the beginning, death and life have been put under a changeless and fixed law, and riches or honours depend on Heaven. (L. 12 : 5) What you guard, that

<sup>34</sup> Or: Can love be other than exacting? (S.)



you keep ; what you let go, that you lose ; there is no predetermined time for this loss and this keeping.<sup>35</sup> (M. 11 : 8) One need not discuss the past or give an opinion to those who cannot adopt it ; what is past should be free from blame.<sup>36</sup> (L. 3 : 21)

4. The blade springs up, but gives no flowers ; if it gave flowers, it would not at all produce ripe grain. (L. 9 : 21) When the winter comes and the other leaves fall, that is when the pine and cypress are admired ! (L. 9 : 27) (*Being on a river-bank*) : How majestically it flows !<sup>37</sup> It stops neither day nor night ! (L. 9 : 16) If in the morning you have heard the voice of the heavenly Reason, in the evening you may die. (L. 4 : 8)

It is not easy to summarise a section made up of almost isolated sayings, and these notes can only draw attention to a few of the more striking among them.

The essence of virtue is a continual controlled awareness, and it is only through this that the ideal can be gained. This is rarely found where flattery and a fine exterior parade themselves, but it soon draws other

<sup>35</sup> No one knows the lifetime destined for him.

<sup>36</sup> Some commentators take this verse as referring to the instability of mental moods ; the mind may be held only with effort, and at any time it may slip out of control.

<sup>37</sup> Or : All is transient, like this ? (S.)



virtues to itself. Our proverb says, "Birds of a feather flock together," and it is certain that the very presence of a good man in a place influences all around him, often to a great distance, with a real pull towards goodness.

Foresight is necessary for success. Very few can fail who have that constancy in the inner balance which is true virtue. Life's real purpose is to help us to know and love others, which alone can ever give us the right and power to guide or govern them, or to help them in any way.

It is God who has decided how long we are to live, and whether we are to be rich or poor (*cf.* GI 11-12, 48). At the same time, we do not know His will in the matter, so we must take all sensible care of our bodies and of our lives; the date of our death, or our success, may after all depend in part at least on what we do. It is useless to "cry over spilt milk," or to throw blame for what is past and out of reach, or to give advice where it is not wanted, however good we ourselves may think it to be.

Everything in Nature has its own proper qualities and use; we shall in due course learn the real value and meaning of everything, just as we appreciate the flowerless evergreens when all other trees are bare. Nature is a wonderful teacher of steadiness and patience—which is one of the finest lessons we can learn in life.

### 34. The Beloved Disciple

1. Oh, how wise he was, Hoi! He had only a bamboo bowl for his food and a bamboo ladle for drinking, and he lived in a hut in a mean alley; any other man than he could not have borne such privations. Yet that did not



change Hoei's sincerity. Oh, how wise he was, Hoei! (L. 6 : 9) Ah, Hoei was the one to whom I could tell things and who never failed to pay heed to them. (L. 9 : 19) He was fond of learning ; he never showed anger to anyone, and he never repeated a mistake. (L. 6 : 1) During three months his heart never wavered from the great virtue of humanity. Other men act so for one month, or only one day, and that is all ! (L. 6 : 5)

2. Hoei did not help me at all (in my discussion) ; in all that I said he found nothing to be dissatisfied about. (L. 11 : 3) I stayed with Hoei for the whole day, and he found nothing to say to me, as if he were a stupid man. Yet on returning home, he examined himself attentively in detail, and he found he could illustrate my teaching. No, Hoei is not a man without capacity ! (L. 2 : 9) Hoei came close to the Straight Path ; yet he was often in direst poverty. Sse (Tsü-kung) did not wish to accept Heaven's decree but yet he gathered riches ; as he tried many plans he often achieved his aim. (L. 11 : 18) But Hoei, unfortunately his life was short and he died. Now there is no one like him. (L. 6 : 1)



3. *When Yen-Yüan (Hoei) died, the Sage said: Alas! Heaven overwhelms me with grief! (He) wept for him excessively. Then the disciples who followed him said: "Our Master gives himself too much to his grief!" (Khung-Tsü) said: Have I not suffered an excessive loss?*<sup>38</sup> *If I do not mourn excessively for such a man, then for whom am I to grieve? On the death of Yen-Yüan, his co-disciples wished to perform grand obsequies for him. The Sage said: That is not necessary. Yet his co-disciples did perform splendid obsequies for him. The Sage said: Hoei looked on me as his father, but I could not consider him as my son. The reason did not come from me but from my disciples. (L. 11 : 8-10)*

4. *Yen-Yüan having died, Yen-Lu*<sup>39</sup> *prayed that the Sage's carriage should be sent to him to sell, so as to buy a tomb. The Sage said: Every father knows his own son whether he has talent or no. When my son Li died, he had only a (wooden) inner coffin and no tomb. I could not go on foot so as to have a tomb built for him, for when I move with great*

<sup>38</sup> Have I gone to excess? (S.)

<sup>39</sup> His father, also known as Yen-wu-Yüo (b. B.C. 546).



dignitaries I ought not to go on foot. (L. 11 : 7)  
In mourning let grief suffice as its highest expression. (L. 19 : 14)

Khung-fu-Tsü praises his closest disciple's extreme simplicity of life. He was always serene even in the hardest of circumstances, and remained steady in the noblest of virtues even though oppressed by real poverty.

He could not help his teacher by asking questions, for all was clear to him and no doubts troubled his mind. At the first glance his silence looked like ignorance, but it was really the quiet of fruitful introspection. While he suffered much in the search for perfection, Sse, another disciple, of different grain, sought comforts with some success even though God had offered him the chance of being poor and of enriching his heart and mind.

The loss of this beloved Hwei at the age of 32 was a great grief to the teacher. At first, the other disciples (was it for jealousy ?) reproved him for showing so much sorrow, thinking it unworthy of a philosopher to give way to feelings. But then they tried to win his favour by proposing a great funeral. Though the teacher did not want this at all, they thought he would be pleased by their disobedience in such a case. Khung-Tsü then said they had really come between him and his dearest follower. (See the similar stories of disciples in GJ 75, 87)

But even his deep sorrow did not shake the Sage from his balance; not even to honour Hwei in death would he do what was not proper. He reminded the dead man's father that he had buried his own son with the utmost simplicity, although he had loved him as much as Hwei had been loved; the father therefore need not feel hurt at the teacher's apparent indifference. It was not fitting that one who had lived so simply in the



pursuit of virtue and wisdom should be buried like a prince. Nor was it fitting that a Sage be humiliated by having to walk while others of his social rank rode, just because he had become too poor to afford a carriage. The truest homage to the dead is sincere sorrow of the heart.

### 35. Various Talks

1. *Tsü-kung said to him: "What I do not want others to do to me, I equally do not wish to do to them." The Sage said: You have not yet reached this point of perfection, Ts'ü! (L. 5 : 11). Yen-Kieu<sup>40</sup> said: "Master, it is not that I am displeased by your teaching, but my strength is not enough." The Sage said: Those whose strength is insufficient go half the way and stop, but you, you lack the will and prevent yourself from even beginning. (L. 6 : 10) Ye-Kong,<sup>41</sup> talking with Khung-Tsü, said: "In my village there is a man of perfect uprightness and sincerity. When his father stole a sheep the son gave evidence against him." Khung-Tsü said: The sincere and upright men of my native place are quite*

<sup>40</sup> Or: San Ch'iu, who later became an official of Lu State but did not satisfy his Master.

<sup>41</sup> The Duke of Shé, a city in Lu State.



unlike that. The father hides his son's faults, the son hides the faults of his father. Uprightness and sincerity lie in that conduct. (L. 13 : 18)

2. *Someone spoke thus to Khung-Tsü :* "Philosopher, why do you not accept public service?" *The Sage said :* We read in the "Shu-Ching"<sup>42</sup> about filial piety: "Only among brothers of differing ages are there the filial piety and concord mainly shown by public servants." Those who practise these virtues, by that very fact are servants of the public. Why consider only those who hold public appointments as doing public service? (L. 2 : 21)

3. If he combines Wu-Chung's knowledge, Kung-Ch'o's moderation,<sup>43</sup> the courage of Chuang-Tsü of P'ien, and Jan-Ch'ü's skill;<sup>44</sup> if besides that he is versed in the knowledge of the rites and of music—he can be considered a perfect man. Where is the need for a

<sup>42</sup> Book of Annals.

<sup>43</sup> Or: purity.

<sup>44</sup> Tsang Wu-Chung was a sage of the previous reign. Kung-Ch'o was an official more honest than clever. Chuang-tsü is said to have killed two tigers in a single day, and Jan-Chü was a clever but unscrupulous disciple who later served under Chi K'ang-tsü in Lu State, but did not satisfy his master.



perfect man of our days to be one of this sort ? (It is enough) if he thinks of justice when he sees some profit to be made, if he risks his life on seeing danger, if he does not forget his words of former days, when it is only a matter of old promises—then too he can be considered a perfect man. (L. 14 : 13)

4. Some wise men flee from the period ; those who are next flee from their country ; those who come next flee from vain pleasures ;<sup>45</sup> and the last flee from deceitful words. (L. 14 : 39)

5. *Chi-Lu (= Tsü-lu) asked how he should serve spirits and ghosts. The Sage said : When you are no longer in a position to serve men, how can you serve spirits and ghosts ? "Let me," he exclaimed, "dare to ask you what death is." The Sage said : When one does not yet know what life is, how can one know death ? (L. 11 : 11)*<sup>46</sup> What has a mean man to do with worship ? (L. 3 : 3) Why, he who

<sup>45</sup> Or : unfriendly looks.

<sup>46</sup> In the *Narratives of the School*, Khung is related to have answered a question of Tsi-kung on this subject by the words, "You need not wish to know whether the dead have knowledge (of us) or not. There is no present urgency about the point. Hereafter you will know it for yourself." (*apud* Legge, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 99)



sins against Heaven has nowhere left for prayer.<sup>47</sup> (L. 3 : 13)

6. *The Sage said*: I do not wish to waste my time in talking. *Tsü-Kung said*: "*If our Master does not speak, then how will his disciples pass on his words to others?*" *The Sage said*: How does Heaven speak? The four seasons follow their course, and in turn all beings of Nature come into existence. How does Heaven speak? (L. 17 : 19)

The Sage discouraged facile boasting in his disciples, and he did not hesitate to expose those who gave false reasons for their failure in spiritual life. His correction of Ye-Kong may at first seem a little harsh in our ears, but it was vitally important not to let the evil idea of spying on and betrayal of the parent creep in under the false pretext of truth and impartial love for justice, as in the famous story of the Roman who executed his own son. This monstrous thing thrived under the Nazis, and those who saw the tragedies it caused will never forget the horror of it. Loyalty to the home must come before any fancied loyalty to the State. If we cannot serve those near to us, who are tied to us by all the bonds of love and gratitude, how can we serve those who are far from us and unknown to us?

Real power and influence do not always by any means reside in the noisy "leader"; the silent sage sitting unseen in a cave or forest may really be swaying the destinies of millions in a way the talker never can. A silent prayer from the heart may often achieve far more than a speech full of violent threats that win

<sup>47</sup> Or: no one to pray to.



rounds of delirious applause from an unthinking mob. Compare Ramana Maharishi's telling words in *Maharishi's Gospel*, p. 23: "Preaching is simple communication of knowledge: it can really be done only in Silence . . . There is abstract knowledge, whence arises the ego, which in turn gives rise to thought, and the thought to words. So the word is the great-grandson of the original Source. If the word can produce effect, judge for yourself how much more powerful must be preaching through Silence!"

A real genius has vast knowledge, moderation, energy, and artistic skill. Such a man was Leonardo da Vinci in the Europe of the Renaissance. But in our lesser days it is enough for a man to be just even against his own interests, to risk his life, and to keep his word. Even this much is all too rare.

Lies are the worst of evils, then come pleasures, the national environment, and last of all the time-spirit itself.

What is the use of our thinking of service to spirits until we are fit at least to serve men? (cf. *Jn.* 4: 24 and *1 Jn.* 4: 20). Let us first learn to help the world we are living in, and then when we come to that world we shall find our experience of great value in knowing how to help those who live there also. It is equally useless to worry about trying to understand death until we have understood what life is. We can better study death when we enter it. Meanwhile let us see that we make the most of our opportunities in *this* world. Like his almost-contemporary in India, the Buddha, Khung-fu-Tsü never encouraged fruitless speculation into things that had no direct bearing, it seemed, on the daily life and morals of men and women. If the growth of material science in our own age may have forced mankind to modify that attitude now, such a fact says nothing against the wisdom of those who acted otherwise in other days. Also, it is futile for a



man to turn his mind to God and to imagine that he can pray to Him, so long as he persists in slavery to sin (see also § 41 : 5).

When he exclaimed that talking really is a waste of precious time that could be better spent in other ways, and a disciple complained that his silence would deprive the world of his teachings, Khung-Tsü gave the truly wonderful reply (with which we leave him) that God speaks to men by the silent actions of Nature herself. By his very life the Wise Man speaks, and even if he never opens his mouth his teachings will through his mighty example become immortal.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE MESSAGE OF MENG-TSU<sup>1</sup>

The fifth Chapter of our little "Gospel of China" is based on the fourth of the great Chinese Classics, MENG-TSU, almost certainly written by Meng-tsu himself and edited by some of his immediate followers. This book gives us brief notes of many conversations between Khung-fu-Tsü's greatest follower, who lived about a century after the Master. Meng-Tsü, whose name is better known to the West in its Latin form of Mencius; he has been called the Confucian St. Paul. But there is certainly far more resemblance between him and his teacher than the documents show between the Prophet Jesus and Paul, the "Apostle to the Nations".

Meng-Tsü treats of almost the same subjects as his Master, and in a way almost the same; the few changes he makes throw much light on the real meaning of their common philosophy. Meng-Tsü often clears up certain obscurities in the Master's teaching by expanding thoughts only lightly touched on by the earlier Sage. He is, perhaps, a little more verbose, and seems to have had less faith in the argument of silent example. Yet he did not think of himself as a separate force, but only as a

<sup>1</sup> In this edition of extracts from the books of Mencius, for convenience the parts have been renumbered as indicated: Bk. I, pt. I has been called 1; Bk. I, pt. II has been called 2; Bk. II, pt. I has been called 3; Bk. II, pt. II has been called 4; and so on.



voice continuing the work of Khung-fu-Tsū, as he in his day had carried on the work of great men who preceded him. The last words of Section 45 bear a very close likeness to what the two greatest Prophets of the West said in later years ; all the Prophets come as messengers to men, to check evil, to teach the truth, and to uphold righteousness (cf. *Gītā* 4 : 7-8). In all the essentials all the great Religions are at one.

### 36. Heaven Rules All

1. Heaven does not speak ; it **makes** its will known by actions and by the conduct (of men), and that is all. (M. 9 : 5) (But) nothing happens that has not been decreed by Heaven, and its just decree must be accepted with submission. That is why one who knows Heaven's just decrees will not place himself under a wall that is about to fall down. He who dies after having practised the whole law of duty (the rule of moral conduct which is within us,) has fulfilled Heaven's decree ; he who dies in the fetters put on criminals has not fulfilled Heaven's decree. (M. 13 : 2)

2. There are men praised beyond all expectation ; there are men pursued by slanders when they seek only to be perfect ; and there are men who have great facility in their



words because they have found no one to catch them up. (M. 7 : 21-22) Success and want of success are not in man's power. If I have not had an interview with the Prince of Lu, it is Heaven which has so determined.<sup>2</sup> (M. 2 : 16)

3. When Heaven wishes to confer a high position on these chosen ones, it always begins by testing their mind by the bitterness of hard days. It wearies their muscles and bones by painful labours; it torments their body with hunger; it reduces their persons to misery and privation; it makes the results of their actions the opposite of what they planned. That is how it stimulates their soul and hardens their nature, expands and increases their powers, (without which they could not have fulfilled their high destiny). Men always begin by making mistakes before they can correct themselves. At first they feel anguish of heart and are perplexed in their plans, but then they make themselves known.<sup>3</sup> It is only when they have looked in the face of others and heard what they say, that they realise their own value. . . So by this you must know that

<sup>2</sup> Or : My not finding the Prince of Lu is the act of Heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Or : vigorously reform themselves.



you live by trials and tests, and you perish through ease and pleasure. (M. 12 : 15)

Everything happens by God's will (cf. § 33 : 3, and GI 91 : 2, and Jn. 17 : 4, 18 : 11), which is revealed not in words but in events. So we must be resigned to all that happens, even while we take all sensible precautions which our knowledge of natural laws suggests. When its centre of gravity is displaced, a wall will fall down; do not stand under such a wall. If you see a bomb falling towards you, get out of its way, and lie flat. Such steps do not show lack of faith in God's power to protect you, but a commonsense use of knowledge of His laws and obedience to them (cf. GJ 55). The aim of Nature's laws is that we should live up to the noblest ideals of duty that we find in our hearts (cf. GI 7, 70, GJ 14, and *Gītā* 2 : 47-48).

Some unworthy folk get fame and wealth, while some noble souls meet only slander and ill-will (cf. GJ 78-79, GI 60, and *Prov.* 15 : 16 and *Psalms* 37 : 17); we should not be disturbed at this, for such inequities are temporary (cf. *Psalms* 37 : 35-36). It is not in our power to ensure success; we can only do our best, and it is God who gives results (cf. § 30, GI 31, *Gītā* 2 : 47-48, and *Psalms* 127 : 1).

The virtuous are afflicted with suffering and reduced to utter misery and frustration (cf. *Bhāg.* 10 : 88 : 8-9). In this way their courage and strength are roused, and they attain the greatest heights (cf. GI 91 : 1). They should not be sad at these troubles, for they carry blessing into the life (cf. § 34, and Jn. 16 : 33). At first come sorrows; only later on do the righteous know the value of that trial and their own virtue is revealed to themselves. It is hardship and struggle that lead to life, while ease and luxury are a road to decay and death. Even the nations have found it so in history.



### 37. Men are Naturally Good

1. All men have a heart compassionate and pitiful to other men. If men suddenly see a young child about to fall into a pit, all at the same moment will feel alarm, fear and compassion. And they show this feeling, not because they want to make friends with the parents of that child, nor because they seek the praise of their friends and fellow-citizens or care for public opinion. From this one can observe that if one has not a pitiful and compassionate heart, one is not a man; if you have no feelings of shame and dislike, you are not a man; if you have no feelings of modesty and reverence, you are no man; if one has no feeling of true and false, of just and unjust, one is no man. (M. 3 : 6)

2. A pitiful and compassionate heart is the essence of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the essence of righteousness; the feeling of modesty and reverence is the essence of social manners; the feeling of true and false is the essence of wisdom. Men have these four principles in them as they have four limbs, . . . and if we know how to develop and



bring them all to fruition they will flare up like a flame, and begin to bubble forth like a spring. (M. 3 : 6)

3. The nature of man is naturally good, as water naturally flows down. There is no man who would not naturally be good, as there is no water that does not naturally flow down. Now by compressing the water with the hand you make it leap up, even over your head; . . . but would you call that the nature of water? It is a result of constraint. So men can be led to do evil, for their nature also allows of that.<sup>4</sup> (M. 11 : 2)

4. (But) all men have the feeling of pity; to extend that feeling to all who are in pain and suffering, that is humanity. All men have the feeling of what ought to be done; to extend that feeling to all they do, that is equity. (M. 14 : 31)

As man is a reflection of God's nature (cf. *Gen.* 1 : 27), so man is naturally good and kind (cf. § 29 : 3, and *GI* 65 : 1). Any man will respond with instinctive pity to the sight of suffering. One who has no pity or conscience, no self-sacrificing love or sense of right and wrong, cannot really be called a man; he is rather a demon in human form.

<sup>4</sup> Or : their nature is dealt with in this way. (I.)



The four greatest virtues arise out of these four essential qualities in every man. They are latent in all, and need only be fanned a little to blaze out into splendid manifestation. The seed of saintliness is in everyone, alike and equally.

Man can only be led to do evil by force of circumstances or by violence. His nature is essentially good, even though it is capable of doing wrong. Modern criminologists are tending towards this idea.

His innate pity must come to extend to *all* who suffer: his innate conscience rule his every thought and act. That is the goal. It is a deepening of sensitiveness and a widening of sympathy that is the true aim of education, the root of culture.

### 38. The Way to Sorrow

1. Men have the principle of Reason in them, but if they lack teaching in satisfying their appetite, clothing themselves warmly, building big houses, then they come very near to the animals. The Saints are afflicted at (seeing) this state of things.<sup>5</sup> (M. 5 : 3)

2. The ancients entrusted their sons to others to be taught and given education. Between the father and the son it is not proper to punish in the interests of good; if the father punishes the son (to lead him to do good), then the two are soon disunited in

<sup>5</sup> Legge's translation of this passage is extremely different and does not seem to fit the context well.



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tion, and then greater troubles soon come  
em. (M. 7 : 18)

He who gives up what he should not  
up will have nothing which he does not  
to give up. He who receives coldly  
whom he should receive with tenderness  
soon receive all coldly. Those who  
nce too hastily will fall back still more  
ly. (M. 13 : 44)

The faults of the cultured men of old  
like eclipses of the sun and moon ; all men  
them, and all men watched their conver-  
with joy. The "cultured men" of our  
not only continue to follow the evil path,  
they even try to justify it. (M. 4 : 9) One  
great defects of men is their love of  
ing others. (M. 7 : 23) The moment his  
ts are born in a man's heart, they alter  
eelings of right and good direction ; (that)  
ent . . . the actions come to be vitiated.  
(M. 13 : 2)

Ordinary people wait for a King like  
-Wang to rouse and lead them (into  
; good). Men distinguished by their  
om do not wait for a Wen-Wang to rouse  
(M. 13 : 10)



Though, guided by the inner Light, men can act nobly, if they lack teaching on how to live they may become like animals, so that even Sages are saddened to see their conduct.

The father should never himself punish his son (cf. *Prov.* 19 : 18), but be always gentle and forgiving (cf. *Col.* 3 : 21), or he will alienate his love and so drive him in despair into evil ways. Others must do the occasional chiding needed, and that is why wise men send their children to others to teach and train them. Part of the "philosophy" behind the parents who send boys to residential schools today, no doubt !

Improper austerity leads to abject poverty ; lack of friendliness drives away all friends ; extreme haste results in certain reaction (cf. § 32 : 3). The first epigram is a fine call to moderation in asceticism as much as in other things, the second warns us against unwise shyness and reserve, which lead to loneliness and the loss of love, while the third shows the danger of rashness in trying for premature reforms, such as Amānullāh's ill-fated plans to emulate Kemāl Atatürk's success. Such un wisdom can only lead to sorrow and failure.

It is certain that all make mistakes. The truly cultured man publicly admits his faults and does what he can to set them right : in that he shows his difference from the common man. Worse than any sin is the hypocritical attempt to justify or excuse it. The desire thus to seem better than others is the root of many sins ; and that is why the Prophets hate hypocrisy above almost all other things (cf. GJ 115-116, 118 : 4, GI 95 : 3, and *Prov.* 28 : 13). The very moment we allow a bad thought to take root in the heart, it is certain that sooner or later a bad action will flower from it (cf. GJ 13, GI 54, 83 : 1, *Prov.* 24 : 9, and § 25 : 2).

It is foolish to wait for some ideal teacher or leader to come down from Heaven ; wise people set to work



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st evil themselves without looking for Avatārs to  
eir work for them. Nor is it by any means sure  
they would follow him even if an Angel or Avatār  
did come to guide them (cf. GI 35-36, and Lk.  
1), and that is why humanity's leaders are always  
much like others. These words of Meng-t'sü are  
suitable for those who in the West still dream that  
t will return and solve their problems for them,  
d of themselves fighting cruelty, ignorance and  
ty, and for certain Indian lovers of reform today  
look for some Mahātma to lead them back to the  
f Gold. This is not the philosophy of the Gītā, nor  
Qurān, nor even of Jesus himself.

### 39. The Humane Ruler

This whole Section is closely parallel to Section 32,  
like that also stresses the truth that a good example  
e only potent teaching, and that a good ruler has  
friends and his foes are powerless against him.

If the Prince is humane, all will be  
ane ; if the Prince is just, none will be un-

(M. 8 : 5) The moment **he** begins to  
rn humanely, the people at once love **him**  
are ready to give their lives for **him**.

2 : 12) If a Prince knows how to govern  
kingdom well, who will dare insult him ?

3 : 4) Never has a humane man aban-  
ed his parents ; it has never happened that  
just and righteous man made little of his  
ice's cause. (M. 1 : 1)



2. If the King lets the people share in his joy and pleasures, then he will reign indeed ; (M. 2 : 1) he truly reigns who uses all his energy in the practice of humanity. If the Prince is full of humanity, he will win great glory for himself ; if he has no humanity, he dishonours himself. Now if while hating dishonour he persists in inhumanity, it is like persisting in living in low places while hating the damp. If the Prince hates dishonour, he can do nothing better than esteeming virtue and honouring men noted for their knowledge and merit. (M. 3 : 4)

3. King, if your government is humane and helpful to the people, if you lessen pains and penalties, if you lighten the taxes and every kind of tribute—the labourers will plough the earth more deeply and pull up the weeds of their fields. The strong young men will in their leisure cultivate in themselves filial piety, deference to their elder brothers, straightness and sincerity. Indoors, they will busy themselves in serving their parents ; out-of-doors, they will busy themselves in serving the aged and their betters. Then you will be able to get them to take their clubs and to



oppose the hard shields and sharp weapons of the men of Thsin and Thsu. (M. 1 : 5)

4. The Kings of these (two) States rob their peoples of their (most precious) time, and prevent them from tilling their lands and weeding their fields so as to be able to feed their parents. Their fathers and mothers suffer from cold and hunger, while their brothers, wives and children are separated from one another and scattered on all sides. These Kings have sunk their peoples into an abyss of misery by inflicting all kinds of tyranny on them. Prince, if you go to punish them, who will oppose your plans? (M. 1 : 5)

5. If one waits till the people are plunged into crime before correcting them by punishments, that is taking the people in a net. How can a humane man sitting on a throne take the people in a net in this way? (M. 5 : 3) To enrol the people without having first taught them, that is what is called pushing the people to their ruin. Those who pushed the people into ruin were not tolerated in the days of Yāo and Shun. (M. 12 : 8)

6. He who subdues men by force does not conquer their hearts; force is never enough



for that, whatever it be<sup>6</sup>. He who subdues men by virtue carries joy into their hearts, which unreservedly give themselves up as the seventy disciples of Khung-fu-Tsü submitted themselves to him. (M. 3 : 3) There is a sure way of winning the Empire ; the people must be won, and by that the Empire is won. There is a sure way of winning the people ; their heart or affection must be won, and by that the people are won. There is a sure way of winning the heart of the people ; that is, to give them what they need and not to force on them what they detest. The people submit to humane rule as the water flows downward, as wild beasts retire into desert places. (M. 7 : 9)

7. Love and cherish the people, and you will meet no obstacle to governing well. (M. 1 : 7) Kind words do not enter so deeply into man's heart as a reputation for kindness. The affection of the people is not so easily gained by good administration as by good teachings through example. By good laws and administration one can gain good revenues from the people ; by good teachings through example one can win their hearts. (M. 13 : 14)

<sup>6</sup> Or : they have not strength enough to resist.



8. When (the straight rule of) Reason is followed in the Empire, the virtue of inferior men follows that of cultured men, and the wisdom of inferior men follows that of cultured men. But when (the straight rule of) Reason is not followed in the Empire, the small serve the great, and the weak serve the strong. These two states (of society) are decided by Heaven; he who obeys Heaven is preserved, while he who resists it perishes. (M. 7 : 7)

9. Of all the parts of a man's body, none is more admirable than the pupil of the eye. The pupil of the eye cannot hide (or disguise) the vices that one has. If the interior of the soul is straight, then the pupil (of the eye) shines (with a pure light); if the interior of the soul is not straight, then the pupil (of the eye) is shadowed.<sup>7</sup> If you listen carefully to a man's words and then look into the pupils of his eyes, how can he hide himself from you? (M. 7 : 15)

The people love and imitate a kind ruler, and none of them will ever disobey him or betray his cause (cf. *Gītā* 3 : 21).

A good ruler shares the life of his people (cf. Marshall Lord Wavell's interesting articles on *Generalship*)

<sup>7</sup> Or : dull.



and is devoted to virtue. One who acts ill and yet expects good for himself is really very foolish. Such a thing can never happen in a universe that is under law.

A kind and gentle ruler will encourage his people to work well, and so he will increase the wealth of his land and the virtue and loyalty of all his subjects. Such a people will always be ready at the moment of crisis to fight against foreign tyrants and aggressors, or against any other kind of trouble. Soldiers will gladly die if need be for a kind and unselfish officer who shares all the difficulties of their life.

Those whose rulers are harsh and selfish, neglecting the happiness of the people, will not easily fight in their defence. They may not actually go over to the foreign liberators, but will watch events with apathy and indifference. Examples of this may be gleaned from events in the world between 1937 and 1945.

It is cruel and treacherous to let people wander into offences and then to punish them. The wise ruler so leads them that they do not stray at all, and so he saves them from the pains of punishment. People must be prepared in advance for any change or reform by careful propaganda, or the reform may only turn to evil and stir up strife and non-co-operation. Universal education is certainly a great need, but until the people clamour for it any attempt to force it on them can only create resentment and evasion. Witness the worthy but futile Sārada Act, and the miserable failure of Prohibition in the United States.

What a noble teaching for so remote an age ! Here we have the very essence of all political wisdom, the pitiable lack of which hurled Hitler and his compeers in imperialistic adventure down into ruin and execration. Force can never win love or convert the heart ; only love and goodness can do that. The right way to gain power is to give people what they need, and not what



they hate ; and so you will win their hearts for all time. There are still many Governments who have to learn this lesson.

Love for the ruled makes it easy to rule well, for love alone creates love and understanding in return. It is a good example rather than good rules or mere efficiency that wins the hearts of people so that they gladly co-operate with their rulers. And remember that all we find in this book about States and Princes, applies equally to Schools and Headmasters, to Societies and Presidents, to Banks and Managers, to families and fathers, to every kind of organisation and its controlling guide.

Under a good ruler all follow the example of the righteous ; under a bad ruler tyranny and slavery prevail. It is God who gives a good or a bad ruler according to a people's deserts, as they say : " A people have the Government that they deserve."

The eye betrays a man's real character ; it is bright when the man is pure, sincere and honest, dull when he is stained with sin and deceit. You can easily tell from a man's shifty eye that he has something to conceal, from his straight look that " he owes not any man" (cf. GJ. 74 : 2).

#### **40. The Need for Introspection**

1. The cultured man keeps humanity in his heart ; he also keeps courtesy there. The humane man loves others ; the courteous man respects others. He who loves men is always loved by men ; he who respects men is always respected by men. (M. 8 : 28)



2. Here is a man who treats me rudely and brutally; then, as a wise man, I should look into myself and ask myself if I have not been inhumane **or** lacking in courtesy; otherwise how could these things have happened to me? If after having looked into myself I find that I have been humane **and** courteous, then if the rudeness and brutality of which I have been the object still go on, as a wise man, I ought to go down into myself anew, and ask myself if I have not lacked sincerity.<sup>8</sup> After this inner examination, if I find I have not been lacking in straightness, and yet the rudeness and brutality . . . still go on, then as a wise man I must say to myself: "This man (who has insulted me) is nothing but an eccentric, and no more. As he is so, in what does he differ from a brute? Then why should I worry myself over a brute?" (M. 8 : 28)

3. If one loves others without receiving signs of affection from them, let him only look into his own humanity; if one governs men

<sup>8</sup> cf. with this the Catholic teaching, as given by the Jesuit Fr. Lallemant in his *Spiritual Doctrine* of 1630: "An excellent way to gain the gift of Knowledge is to study much the purity of your own heart, to watch carefully over its interior, to recognise all its unruly movements, and to note its principal defects."



and men do not let themselves be easily governed by him, let him look only to his own wisdom (and prudence); if one treats men politely but is not repaid with courtesy, let him look only to the fulfilment of his own duty. When we do that, if we do not happen to get what we want, we should in every case only search for the cause of it in ourselves. (M. 7 : 4) All life's actions have their principle or cause in ourselves. If when we turn back to ourselves we find them perfectly true and in perfect harmony with our own nature, there can be no greater satisfaction.<sup>9</sup> If you do all you can to act towards others as you would see them acting towards you, nothing comes nearer to the humanity we seek than this conduct. (M. 13 : 14)

Courtesy shows respect to all, but humaneness is greater than courtesy, for it adds to this respect a sincere love for all. We receive from others in return just what we ourselves have given them, so we must see that we do not give them evil if we wish for good (cf. GJ 51, *Lk.* 6 : 38, *Gal.* 6 : 7, *Rom.* 2 : 6, and GI 16 : 4, 50 : 1-5).

So whenever we receive rudeness or treachery we should at once look into ourselves to find its cause, and expel that. If the ill-treatment still goes on, we

<sup>9</sup> Or : All things are already complete in us. There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination. (L.)



should look still deeper into ourselves, below all the veils we draw round our inmost thoughts to give a good appearance to others, and when we are quite certain that no blame of any kind can be found in our own hearts and lives, then we may take it that our enemy is only acting like a fool and cease to worry about it, leaving him alone as far as possible until he himself gets tired of injuring us (cf. § 23 : 4).

Unreturned love and service are almost always secretly insincere and spring from unworthy and selfish motives. All evil comes only from ourselves (cf. GI 91) and it is only reflected back on us from others because it finds no home in their nature. If we are thus driven back to self-examination and after an honest search we are able to satisfy ourselves that we are really wholly innocent, well, that is one of life's greatest joys. To know that we are clean through and through—what is sweeter to the sincere soul? The noblest thing anyone can do is always to do as we would be done by. Again, we here find the Golden Rule in its more familiar positive form, as in § 25 : 1.

## 41. The Way to Righteousness

1. Humanity is man's calm abode; justice is man's straight path. To leave untenanted his calm abode, to leave untrodden his straight path—Oh, how lamentable that is! (M. 7 : 10) This humanity I have so often spoken of is man (himself);<sup>10</sup> if one joins these two together, that is the path.<sup>11</sup> (M. 8 : 16)

<sup>10</sup> *Commentator*: for it is the Reason that constitutes his being.

<sup>11</sup> *Commentator*: that is, doing all things in harmony with our nature.



2. The Straight Path is near to you, and you seek it far away! It is one of the easy things, and you look for it among those that are hard! (M. 7 : 11) Seek, and then you will find; neglect all, and then you will lose all. Seeking serves to find or obtain if we seek the things that are within us; seeking does not serve to obtain if we seek the things that are outside us. (M. 13 : 3)

3. Truth (pure and sincere) is the Way of Heaven; to meditate on the truth is the Way (or duty) of Man. There has never been a man who, being wholly true and sincere, has not won the trust and favour of others; there has never been a man who, not being true or sincere, has been able long to hold this trust and favour.<sup>12</sup> (M. 7 : 12) The words whose simplicity is within the reach of all and whose meaning is deep are the best.<sup>13</sup> (M. 14 : 32) Oh, how many there are who act without fully knowing what they do, who repeat (their acts) without understanding, who follow their straight path unknowingly till the end of their days! (M. 13 : 5)

<sup>12</sup> Or : has been able to move others.

<sup>13</sup> Or : Simple words with far-reaching meaning are the best.



4. Man cannot help blushing (for his faults); if once he is ashamed of not having felt shame (for his faults), then he will have no more reasons for shame. (M. 13 : 6) Do not do what you ought not to do, do not desire what you ought not to desire;<sup>14</sup> if you do so much, you have fulfilled your duty. (M. 13 : 17) In order to entertain in our hearts the feelings of humanity and equity,<sup>15</sup> nothing is better than lessening desires. Very few men are there who, having few desires, do not keep all the virtues of their hearts, and there are still fewer who, having many desires, keep those virtues. (M. 14 : 35)

5. Men differ from one another in the principles of their nature; . . . that is because they cannot fully carry out their innate powers. (M. 11 : 6) That wherein man differs from the beasts is quite small; most people lose it, while the cultured men preserve it. (M. 8 : 19) If men do what is not good, they cannot blame their innate faculties. (M. 11 : 6) Never has a man who has bent

<sup>14</sup> Chāo-Chi' explains this differently: Let not a man make another do what he would not do himself . . . etc.

<sup>15</sup> Or: To nourish the mind . . .



himself been able to straighten others. (M. 6 : 1) Even though a man be wicked, yet if he change his thoughts, fast and cleanse himself, he may sacrifice to Heaven. (M. 8 : 25) The way of truth is like a great road. It is not hard to know it ; the evil is only that men will not seek it. If you go home and search for it, you will have plenty of teachers. (M. 12 : 2) There are many ways of teaching. If I refuse, as inconsistent with my nature, to teach a certain man, yet I am still teaching him thereby. (M. 12 : 16) Wherever a Sage passes by, a transformation takes place ; wherever he dwells, his influence is of a spiritual nature. It flows abroad, above and below, like that of Heaven and Earth. How can one say that he reforms society only in a small way ? (M. 13 : 13)

It is really easy and natural for all men to be good, or only in that way can they be happy ; what a pity it is, then, that so many turn aside into crooked and painful ways ! The Inner Light is the very essence of man's nature, and his whole work is to harmonise his whole life with that essence.

The truth is very near to all of us and easy for us to find (cf. § 14 : 1). God is always, as someone said, "closer than hands or feet" (cf. GI 5 : 1, 16 : 5). He is in our very heart, and yet we are always wandering out to look for Him in remote and inaccessible places.



If we only look for Him in our hearts (cf. GJ 103 : 1), we shall surely find Him (cf. *Mt.* 7 : 7), but if we go on looking for Him in the wrong place, that is, outside ourselves, we shall not find Him so easily.<sup>16</sup> And if we do not look at all, we shall lose even what little light we have to start with.

As that Heaven, or God, we seek is nothing but the Truth, man's clear duty is to seek and think about the truth. Thus his own nature will show itself more and more as true and sincere, and he will easily win the trust and love of others, which can be won only in that way. Simple and straight speech is good (cf. GJ 13 : 3), and the practice of the simple virtues is good. Many pass their day without knowing the victories they have won, or how much their own purity and sincerity have been intensified. Many others pass their whole lives without once realising whither they tend, or what they have to learn from them.

It is natural to be ashamed of wrong deeds and bad thoughts. It is only when we feel shame at being unaware of our own failings that we can know that faults are nearly purged away from our hearts. Control of deed and desire is our duty. If desires grow less, it becomes easy for us to grow more noble ; for the man of many desires is a man of ignoble nature. The likeness of this teaching to that of the *Gītā* and many other Vedāntic texts, and of many Stoic and Buddhist works, is obvious.

To say that all men are equal is to blind oneself to the obvious facts of life. To say that all alike have implanted in them the divine light of conscience and a natural tendency to good, balancing a certain hereditary tendency to evil of which most of us are aware, is to admit a great moral responsibility.

<sup>16</sup> As St. Augustine says in his *Confessions* (6 : 1, 10 : 27) : " I . . . sought Thee not within me but without, and found not the God of my heart. . . . Behold, Thou wast within, and I was without, and I sought Thee there."



Outwardly man seems merely like a rather clever animal ; it is not hard for him to sink morally and spiritually to the level of the beasts. Yet such a fall must be rightly attributed to man's wilful choice, for he has free will to do well or ill. Even if he chooses ill for a time, he has the power to repent and make himself clean from his sin ; and then he can resume the interrupted right of divine contacts belonging to him as a human being. If he turns to seek the right, he will easily find help, for 'when the disciple is ready, the teacher is already there.' The very presence, and every act, of the true teacher is a lamp and inspiration ; even his very refusal to accept a pupil is itself a teaching, the best that pupil can receive at that time. Indeed, even if the teacher abstains from action altogether, his silence preaches clearer than many words. In this paragraph we have some of the highest and most truly ethical of the teachings of the Chinese Sages.

## 42. Service

1. You should do good deeds, and not calculate their results in advance. The soul should neither forget its duty, nor rush its fulfilment. (M. 3 : 2). If you (have cause to) honour (yourself for your) virtue, if you (have cause to) rejoice over (your) equity, then you will be able to keep a tranquil and serene face. (M. 13 : 9)

2. Who is there who is exempt from service? The duties one owes to one's parents form the fundamental basis of all duties. Who is there who is exempt from acts



of guarding? The guarding of himself is the very foundation of all guarding. (M. 7 : 19)  
If each one loves his parents and reveres his elders as they should be revered, the Empire will enjoy tranquillity. (M. 7 : 11)

3. The most precious fruit of kindness <sup>17</sup> is the service of the parents ; the most precious fruit of equity is obedience to the elder brother ; the most precious fruit of wisdom is knowing these two things and never departing from them ; the most precious fruit of courtesy is carrying out these two duties (with kindness and tact) ; the most precious fruit of music <sup>18</sup> is to love these two things. If you love them they soon grow ; once growing, how can they be repressed? When the feelings these virtues inspire cannot be repressed, then without knowing it the feet begin to dance and hands to clap. (M. 7 : 27)

4. He who develops all his mental powers knows his own mind ; and once he knows his own mind, he knows Heaven. To guard the mental powers and feed the mind—it is in so doing he conforms himself to the will of

<sup>17</sup> *Or* : the substance of benevolence.

<sup>18</sup> *Commentator* : which produces concord and harmony.



Heaven. Not to consider as different a long life and a short life, to force himself to improve his own person while awaiting the one or the other—it is in so doing he carries out the mandate he has received from Heaven. (M. 13 : 1)

Keep a calm purpose in your mind, and steadily do the good work that comes to you to do, without caring for success or failure in it (cf. § 36, GJ 31, and *Gitz* : 38, 47). This calmness of purpose will come to you only when you know, by honest introspection, that you are just and righteous, without ulterior motives.

All have to serve others in life (cf. GJ 72-73, 109), and the first service is that owed to the parents who first gave us the body fit for our life on earth. If all love their own parents at least, then peace will everywhere prevail. The psychoanalysts have proved in our own day how much of the stress and frustration that lead to other ills in our lives arises only from jealousy and fear of one or both the parents in the very youngest childhood. All have a duty of guarding others, but what is first to be guarded is the gate of their own minds and hearts.

The best result of the four great virtues is kind and helpful service to parents and elders. The best result of music is a love for concord and harmony : when these arise in the soul, all other virtues grow there, and the body itself adopts their rhythms. This is an interesting argument for making music—and other arts—the very centre of a new and more ideal education.

To know the self is to know the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. GJ 103 : 1), that is, to know God and His will. That we should cultivate that wisdom and keep ourselves pure and calm is God's will for us, because in that mood of undivided Poise we can see Him (cf § 33 : 2, and



GI 70, 73, and *Mt.* 5 : 8-9, *Jn.* 17 : 3, 15, and *Gītā* 13 : 18, 6 : 27-31). We do God's will when, indifferent to life or death, joy or pain, we steadily work at our self-improvement. This is more useful than trying to reform others (cf. GJ 51, GI 50 : 2-3); it is also the only sure way we can find satisfaction and happiness in ourselves, for we can make ourselves what we desire but we can very very rarely mould another to our own ideas, even our own little children. True *nishkāma-karma* can be done by the Self-knower alone.

### 43. The Cultured Man

This whole section is a parallel to Sections 26-29. Herein Meng-Tsü adds his own comments to those of his Master on the signs of the true Gentleman.

1. What makes up the nature of the cultured man is not augmented by a great increase of activity, is not lessened by staying a long time in the state of poverty and retirement, because the portion is fixed and immutable. What makes up the nature of the cultured man—humanity, equity, courtesy and prudence—has its foundations in the heart. These attributes show themselves in the posture, appear in the face, cover the shoulders, and spread out in the four limbs. (M. 13 : 21)

2. The cultured man does all he can to grow in grace by various means; his most



ardent desire is to have in his heart this (virtue of the) natural Reason. Once he has it, then he firmly clings to it, he makes it his permanent abode, **then** he explores it deeply; <sup>19</sup> having deeply explored it, he then meets it on every side and makes use of it as an abundant Source. That is why the cultured man ardently longs to have this so precious natural Reason in his heart. (M. 8 : 14-15)

3. He makes his studies as wide as possible so as to enlighten his Reason and explain things clearly; he is resolved to go back again in order to reveal their essence briefly. (M. 8 : 15) Flowing water is such an element that unless you direct it towards canals and tanks it does not slip into them (of itself). So unless the student of right Reason gives it its full development, he will not arrive at the supreme degree of sainthood. (M. 13 : 24)

4. If the cultured man has no firm confidence (in his Reason), how can he keep virtue steady (after he has embraced it)? (M. 12 : 12) While carrying out the Law, the cultured man simply waits for destiny to be fulfilled. (M. 14 : 33) The cultured man never murmurs

<sup>19</sup> Or : he reposes a deep faith in it.



against Heaven, and never complains against men. (M. 4 : 13) If you talk of men's evil deeds, how can you avoid the troubles you prepare for yourself? (M. 8 : 9) The cultured man carries his bow, but he does not draw it. (The principles of virtue) shine suddenly (in the eyes of those who seek it). He holds himself in the Middle Way (that is, the path of equilibrium or poise), and those follow him who can. (M. 13 : 41) When the Sage does anything, the men of the crowd<sup>20</sup> certainly do not understand the motives for it. (M. 12 : 6)

5. The humane man keeps no resentment against his brother, he nourishes no hatred for him. He loves him and cherishes him as a brother, and that is all. Just because he loves him, he wishes him to be honoured; just because he cherishes him, he wishes him to be rich. (M. 9 : 3) The cultured man is kind to all living beings, but he does not love them as he loves men. He has humane feelings for men, but he does not love them with the same love as he has for his father and mother. (M. 13 : 45) I have often heard it said that the cultured man will not stint worldly goods

<sup>20</sup> *Commentator* : ordinary men.



in the duties he owes to his parents. (M. 4 : 7)  
The wise man does not ignore anything ; he is most earnest in learning what it is important for him to know. As for the humane man, there is nothing he does not love, but he applies himself with all his powers to love what deserves to be loved. (M. 13 : 46)

6. The cultured man teaches five things : One is that he turns men to good in the same way as a seasonable rain (makes the earth's fruits grow) ; he is one who perfects their virtues ; he is one who develops their natural faculties (and inner light) ; he is one who shines by the replies he gives to questions ; and lastly he is one of those who turn themselves to the good and make themselves better. These are the five ways in which the cultured man teaches others. (M. 13 : 40)

7. The cultured man enjoys three kinds of satisfaction : To have his father and mother still alive, without any cause of trouble or discord among his brothers, this is the first of them ; not to have to blush before Heaven . . . or before men, is the second . . . ; to be so happy as to meet in his own day men of talent and virtue, whose virtues and talents can be



increased by his own teachings, is the third of these delights. (M. 13 : 20)

8. The cultured man who serves his Prince will exhort him to conform himself with the right Reason, and to apply his thoughts to the practice of humanity, no more. (M. 12 : 8)  
There is nothing greater for the cultured man than helping other men to practise virtue. (M. 3 : 8)

First he points out that the Gentleman, the Superior Man, need not be outwardly very active nor renounce his possessions. His qualities remain whether he be rich or poor, resting or at work, for they are in his heart and not in any outer thing he may keep or give away. Yet you can see what he is even by his outer appearance—his gait and face and actions proclaim it to the world.

He tries earnestly to enthrone the Inner Light in his own life, and then clings fast to that whatever happens, diving ever deeper into it in search of the Eternal. Having found it there, he then finds it everywhere around him, and can always drink from its life-giving stream, as Krishnaji puts it in lovely words in his *Pool of Wisdom*. These thoughts are in the Scriptures of every religion worthy of the name; it would be tedious to try to list the parallels.

He studies both widely and deeply in order to understand Truth and to enthrone that Wisdom in himself, nor does he weary of constant recurrence to the same topics. Unless the mind is controlled and turned into useful channels, it will go astray and work havoc instead of bringing life to the tender seedlings of virtue in our hearts.



Steadily relying on his conscience, he does the right and leaves results to Heaven. So he never complains of what comes to him, knowing that all is good because it is the will of God, who is wholly good. He does not complain about others either, for such complaints only bring trouble to himself and bitterness to others. He is always ready to act, but he never acts in such a way as to offend another, and you can see his goodness shining in his very eyes. Happy are those who can be like this, even though they must always be misunderstood by common folk; their love and kindness will certainly triumph when combined with patience.

The Cultured Man feels neither anger nor dislike for others, but loves all like brothers, and therefore he longs to see them happy and prosperous. *Agraphon* 131 puts it: "He who loves the neighbour like himself will wish for him also the same good things he wishes for himself." Cicero (*de Offic.* 3 : 6) has the same thought: "Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, for this very reason that he is a man." He will pour out all he has in serving his parents. Though he loves all that lives, he yet loves men most of all; though he loves all mankind, he yet loves his parents more than others.<sup>21</sup> He does all he can to learn what is useful and to choose worthy friends.

He teaches five things: to seek the Good, to grow in grace, to develop in mind and heart, to give wise answers, and to devote himself to the Good. His own example in each is very potent.

Three things make him happy: to have a happy home with his parents in it, to have no cause for shame, and to meet worthy friends whom he can help and serve.

He urges anyone with power whom he can influence to seek the noblest, for the highest joy a man can know is to lead others to truth and virtue.

<sup>21</sup> This is clearly a refutation of the doctrine of Mo-ti, the apostle of equal universal love.



#### 44. The Saint

1. I call that man who is worthy of imitation good; I call him who really possesses goodness in himself sincere; he who ceaselessly gathers these qualities in himself is called excellent; he who has these virtue-jewels brightly displayed is called great; he who is great and yet completely effaces the outer signs and tokens of his greatness is called holy; <sup>22</sup> while he who is holy and at the same time cannot be known by the senses is called spirit. (M. 14 : 25)

2. To live constantly in the great abode of the world, <sup>23</sup> to stand erect in the right seat of the world, <sup>24</sup> to walk in the straight path of the world, <sup>25</sup> to share what he has with the people when he has gained his desire, and when he has not gained that desire to practise righteousness in solitude, (doing all the good he can); not to let himself be corrupted by riches and honours and to remain unmoved in poverty and

<sup>22</sup> *Or*: When this great man exercises a transforming influence, he is what is called a sage, (So Legge, who seems here to miss the force of the climax in this verse).

<sup>23</sup> *Or*: love.

<sup>24</sup> *Or*: courtesy.

<sup>25</sup> *Or*: justice.



humiliation ; not to bow at the sight of danger or of armed might—that is what I call being a great man. (M. 6 : 2) The great man does not require of himself to be sincere in what he says ;<sup>26</sup> he does not expect any definite results of what he does ; he keeps only righteousness in view. The great man is the one who has not lost the innocence (and candour) of his childhood. (M. 8 : 11-12)

3. I have never heard it said that by behaving crookedly a man has made others straight and sincere ; still less could he have done so if he had himself been dishonoured. The actions of Saints are not all alike ; some step aside into retreat, while others come forward into power ; some withdraw from the Kingdom, while others stay there. But they have all of them the aim to make themselves pure, free from every stain, and no more. (M. 8 : 12) The compasses and the rule are the instruments for perfecting circles and squares ; the Saint is the perfect fulfilment of the duties laid down for men. (M. 7 : 2) The Saint belongs to the way of Heaven. (M. 14 : 24)

<sup>26</sup> *Commentator* : he says it naturally, spontaneously.



Meng-Tsü here gives six stages in the spiritual life:—goodness, sincerity, excellence, greatness, holiness, and spirituality. Note that he stresses that the true holy man covers up the outward splendour (*tejas*) that comes with real greatness. The saint does not show his inner powers (*siddhis*), but rather hides himself behind an assumed cloak of foolishness or vagabondage to escape the worship of others, (cf. the various forms assumed by the *Jñāni* living in the world, as described in the Upanishads). He, the *Jivanmukta*, then passes beyond the sense-world, and becomes the Bodiless, the *Videhamukta*, of Samskrit texts.

This is a beautiful account of the life of a truly great man. He lives among men, but rests always on the Divine Basis, which is the Inner Light, and acts always in concord with that ideal. He shares with others whatever he may have; if he has nothing, he remains apart in perfect peace and does whatever he can to help those who come to him. He cares nothing for fame or wealth, for shame or poverty, nor has he fear of anything. He dwells naturally in truth, and easily follows the path of justice without looking for any special result desired. All through his life he keeps the purity and frankness of the child with which he began (cf. § 29 : 3) and he reflects that innocence on all around him (cf. GJ 75, *Isa.* 11 : 6 and the fine description of the *Sthitaprajna* in *Gītā* 2 : 55-72).

How can one who is himself dishonest, a lover of the lie, teach others to be true and honest? You cannot know a Saint only by his outer form, for Saints act in various ways. Some play a big rôle in public, while others retire into caves or forests. None but the Saint can know a saint, they say. Their only common character is that all love purity and ever seek for greater purity in themselves. They belong to God and are indeed the perfect fruition of mankind.



## 45. The Mandate of Heaven

This last section of the Gospel of China gives Meng-Tsü's version of the *Guru-paramparā*, as it were, and explains his own place in it as the successor of Khung-fu-Tsü.

1. In past times, when Khung-fu-Tsü died, his disciples mourned three years for him and then packed their effects and prepared each to return to his own house. Then they all went together to take leave of Tsü-Kung. When they thus found themselves in one another's presence,<sup>27</sup> they burst into tears and mourned until they lost their voices. Then they returned to their families. Tsü-Kung came back to near his Master's tomb; he built himself a dwelling near this tomb, and lived in it alone for three years. Then he too returned to his family. (M. 5 : 4)

2. Another day, Tsü-Hsiā, Tsü-Chang and Tsü-Yeu,<sup>28</sup> considering that Yeu-Jo<sup>29</sup> was very

<sup>27</sup> Or: looked at one another.

<sup>28</sup> Tsü-Yeu, a native of Wu State, was born in B.C. 506 and was noted for his great literary skill and ability.

<sup>29</sup> Yeu-Jo was one of Khung's most famous disciples. He was noted for his good memory and his love of antiquity. In voice and appearance he was so like his Master that the other disciples wanted to make him their leader. Some of his followers took part in writing the book *Lun-Yu*.



like the Saint, wished to serve him as they had served Khung-fu-Tsü. When they pressed Thseng-Tsü to join them, Thseng-Tsü<sup>30</sup> said to them: "That is not proper. If you wash something in the Chiang and the Han, and then expose it to the autumn sun to bleach it, oh, how brilliant and clean it becomes! Its whiteness cannot be surpassed!" (M. 5 : 4)

3. From the time men have existed even until our days, there has never been one to compare with Khung-fu-Tsü; but what I desire above all is to learn to be like Khung-fu-Tsü. (M. 3 : 2) I also long to put men's hearts right, repress wicked talk, oppose unbalanced actions, and repel corrupting ideas with all my might, so as to continue the work of the three great Saints (who have gone before me).<sup>31</sup> Is that the mere love of argument? I cannot help doing as I have done. Whoever by his talks can fight Yang and

<sup>30</sup> Thseng-tsü was a man of pleasant appearance, noble and of natural dignity, virtuous, of wide learning and impressive in his speech. His love for his parents was so intense that it is said he even felt his mother's pain once from a great distance and went to help her, and that after their death he could not hear the funeral rites without tears. He edited *Ta-Hio* and part of the Book of Rites, also composing *The Classic of Filial Piety*. (publ. in The Wisdom of the East Series).

<sup>31</sup> *Commentator* : that is, Yu, Cheu-Kung and Khung-fu-Tsü.



Mo is a disciple of the Saints.<sup>32</sup> (M. 6 : 9) could not be a disciple of Khung-fu-Tsü, but I have tried to gather his precepts of virtue for men.<sup>33</sup> (M. 8 : 22) How can he possibly be equalled? (L. 19 : 25) And when another sage arises, he will not turn from my words (M. 3 : 2)

At the Sage's death, the due mourning of three years being at an end, his disciples took leave of their leader and wept before him. When they had gone, the leader himself went and lived near the Sage's tomb for another period of mourning by himself, for the leader must show twice as much sorrow and reverence and affection as his followers.

Several disciples chose one of their number to succeed the Sage, but another disciple reproved them, saying, "It is not his own purity you see in him, but only the saintliness of Khung-fu-Tsü reflected in him." Clearly, he thought there could never be another to take the empty place. It is not for men to choose the Saint's successor, or the successor of the Prophet; it is God (or Heaven) who sends a successor in His own time, and we must only await that hour.

In due course, Meng-Tsü himself came. He adds here that his greatest wish was to be like the most famous of Saints who preceded him, though he never claimed that high title for himself. He longed to serve

<sup>32</sup> cf. M. 6 : 9 : "Yang's idea is "each one for himself", which does not acknowledge the King. Mo's idea is "to love all equally", which does not admit the claims of a father. But to acknowledge neither King nor father is to be in the state of a beast." Strong words: but Mo never says 'Love all *equally*.'



men by a manly fight against evil and the lie, so that he might carry on the work of the Saints of the olden days. The Commentator here explains that the three referred to include Khung-fu-Tsü himself, of whom Meng-Tsü was indeed the natural successor. The strenuous war of words kept up by Meng-Tsü was not from any love of disputation, but a natural expression of his disgust for the two heretical sects prevalent in his day (and known also in ours!). One of these taught that all men should be equal in Society and have no rulers (a kind of proto-Anarchism), and the other taught that all men should be loved alike without any special honour going to parents and friends (cf. certain modern sentimentalists who, in pretending to love all mankind, show that love by indifference or hate for those nearest to themselves).

Lastly, and with a certain touch of pathos, Meng-Tsü admits that he cannot really live up to the sublime standard set by his Teacher, the great Khung-fu-Tsü; but he adds that he has done what little he can to collect and spread his holy teachings or to use them in his own life. Others who follow him with Heaven's mandate can give no different message to that which he has given.

With this closing paragraph we may compare what Jesus, Māni and Muḥammed said about the Prophets who went before them, and what the Bāb and his successors said of Muḥammed himself. Then we shall realise the glorious truth that *all* Religions come from one Divine Source and are brought to men by divinely commissioned Messengers. We err if we worship the Messengers, but we can never err by feeling the deepest and liveliest gratitude and reverence for them (cf. GI 37-38) as loyal workers in the uplift of our human race from darkness into Light, from death to Immortality.







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This Index cannot claim to be exhaustive, but may assist students in tracing the main teachings of this Gospel of China.



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### CORRIGENDUM

Page XX, line 9: Read *Yang* for *Yin*.

Page XX, line 10: Read *Yin* for *Yang*.



